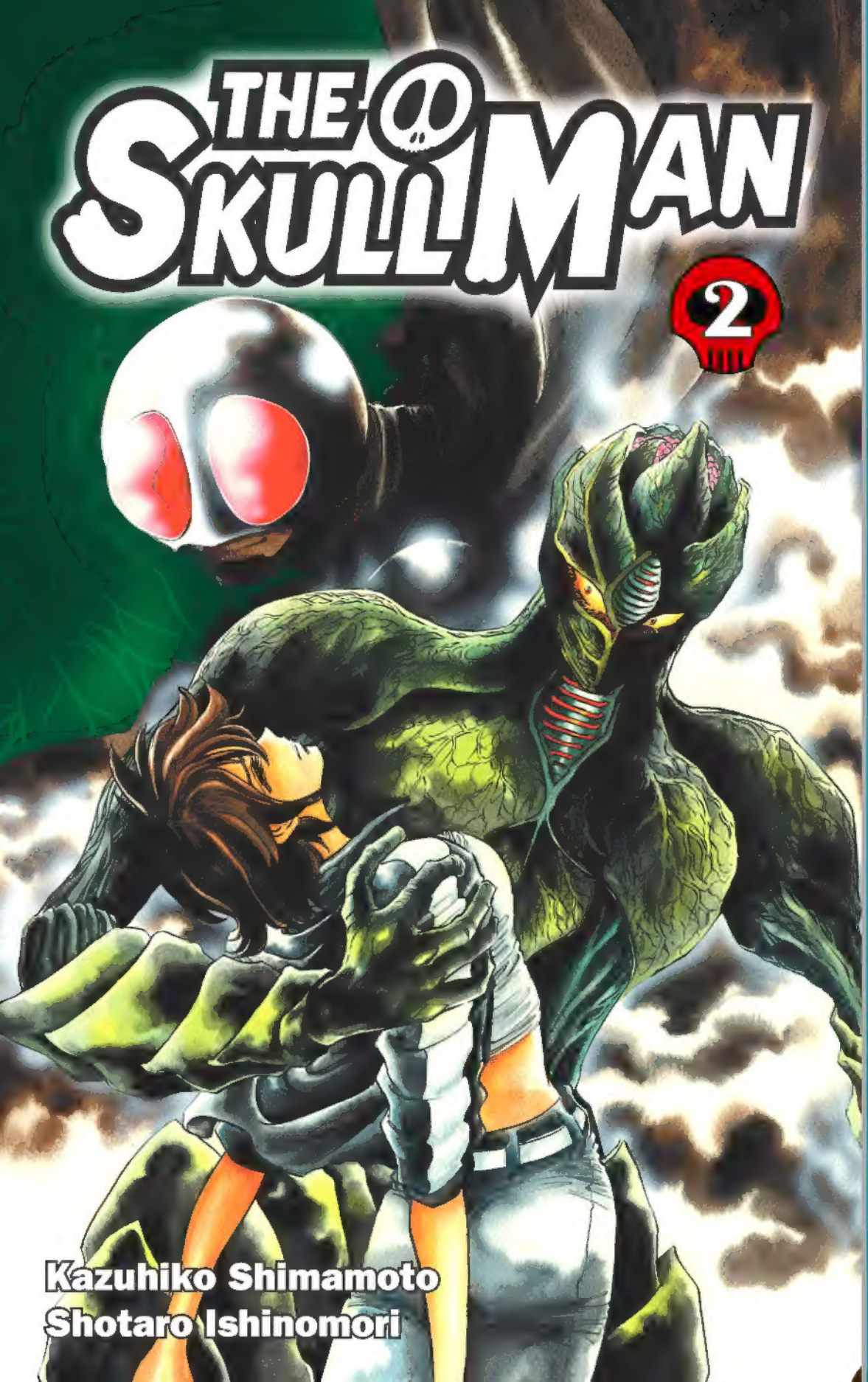
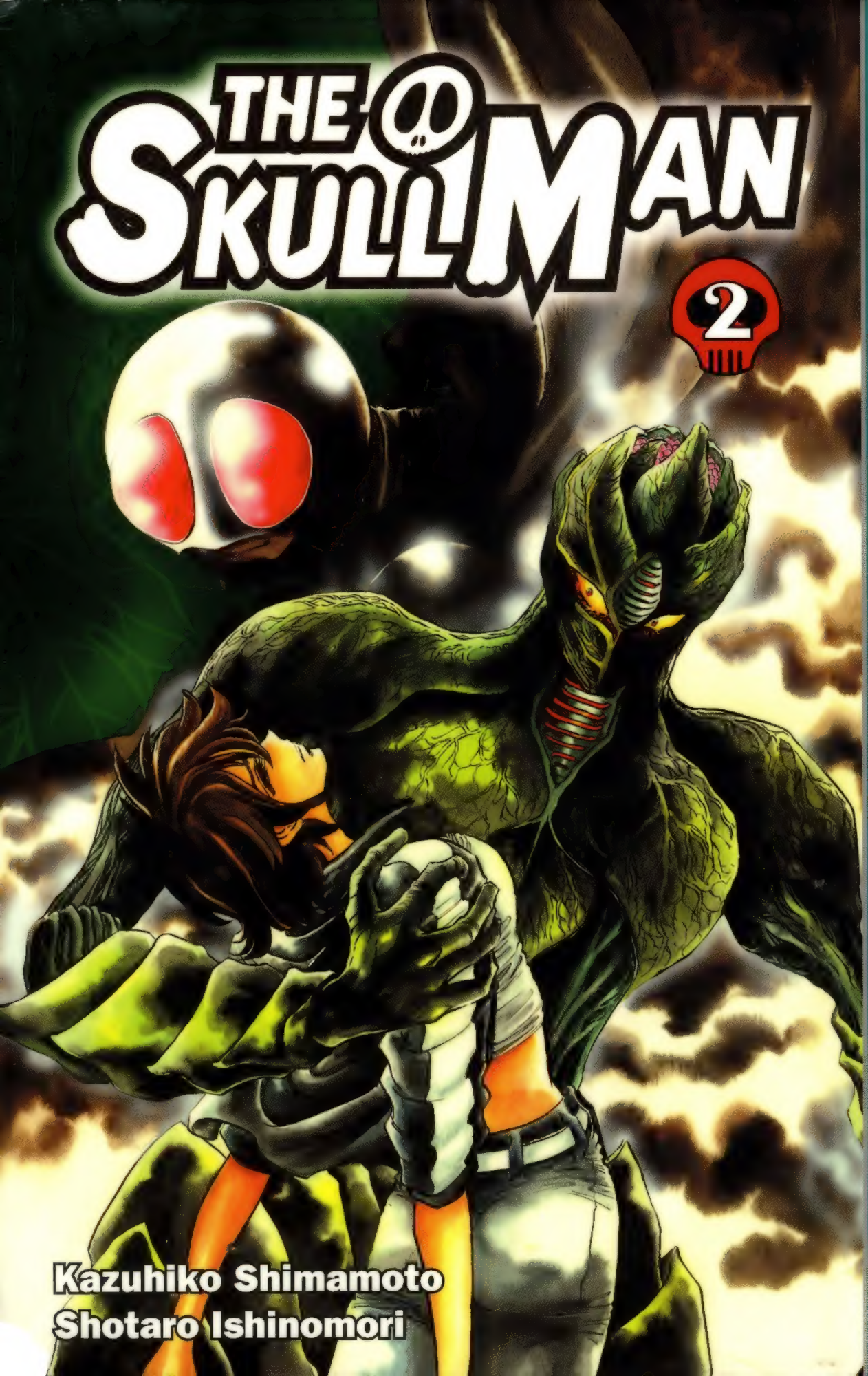

THE SKULL MAN
2
Kazuhiko Shimamoto
Shotaro Ishinomori
TOKYOPOP

THE SKULL MAN

2



Kazuhiko Shimamoto

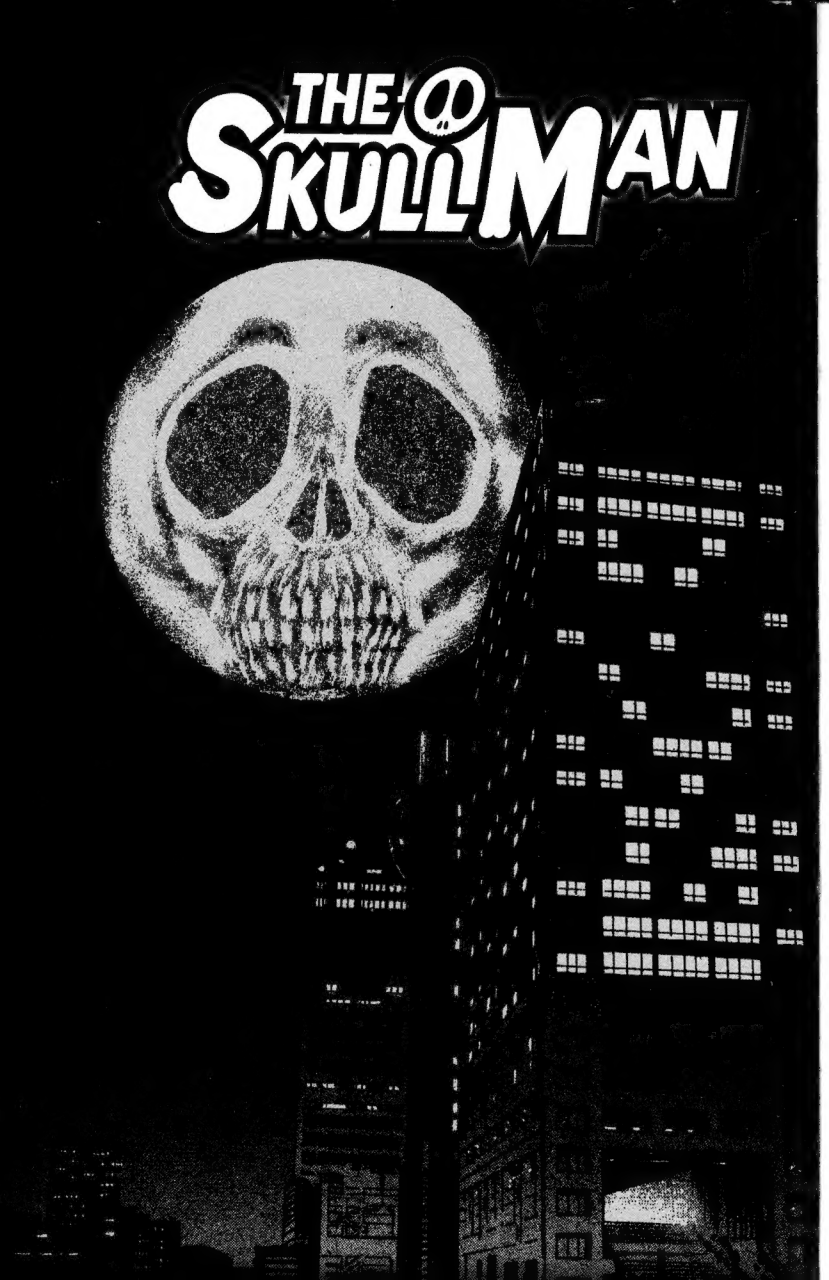
Shotaro Ishinomori

THE SKULL MAN

Graphic Novel/
Action Adventure
USA $9.99

His impulsion to avenge his parents' murder has yielded to a greater sense of purpose. But the Skull Man is still haunted by the demons of his past. An old friend might hold the key to unlocking the mysteries behind an underground organization linked to his parents' killers, but seeking an answer may lead to Skull Man's own destruction.

On the trail of both The Skull Man and the organization, feisty, fearless field reporter Satsuki Katsurugawa has uncovered the elusive anti-hero's identity, but stands to be another target if she digs too deep.


THE SKULL MAN

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Parasite Green 87

Clone Laboratory 115

The Night Burns for You 143

Secret File 173

8 焼け跡に潜む蠍 A SCORPION LURKING IN THE RUINS

After a quarter-century of dormancy, Shotaro Ishinomori's archetypal anti-hero has been resurrected, so to speak, in the imagination of mangaka Kazuhiko Shimamoto (who collaborated with Ishinomori shortly before the manga legend's death in 1998 to develop this series of The Skull Man). The Spider Man and Maria have tracked The Skull Man back to his ossuarious lair in the ruins of an abandoned church, where the eponymous crime-fighter and his trusted companion Garo lie in wait. And in a climactic battle, The Skull Man unleashes powers beyond his imagination, causing the church to erupt in a violent conflagration. In the aftermath, the police arrive to investigate, as does an alacritous field journalist who is passionately driven to get to the bottom of the mysterious and elusive Skull Man.

THE SKULL MAN

A DARK ANTI-HERO WHOSE QUEST FOR ANSWERS TO HIS PAST CONSUMES HIS PRESENT.

TATSUO

TATSUO'S HIGH SCHOOL COMPANION WHOSE AFFILIATIONS WITH A FACELESS ORGANIZATION BRING HIM IN OPPOSITION TO HIS OLD FRIEND.

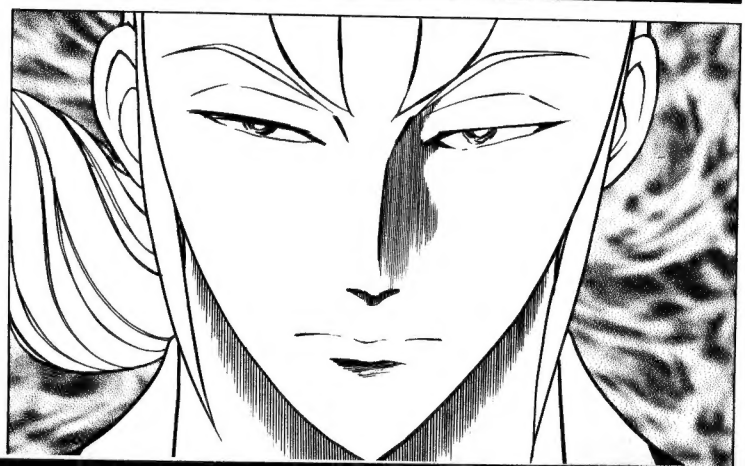
GARO

THE SKULL MAN'S FRIEND AND CONFIDANT. TOGETHER THEY SEARCH FOR THE ORIGINS OF THEIR MUTANT POWERS.

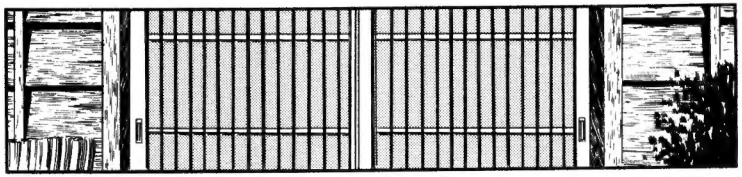
GORO AYASE

SATSUKI KATSURAGAWA

A REPORTER THAT LABORS TO UNCOVER THE SKULL MAN MYSTERY, BUT SHOULD SHE JOIN FORCES WITH THE POLICE?



神楽組
*THE KAGURA CLAN



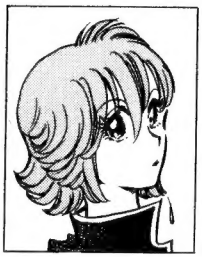
ガラ!

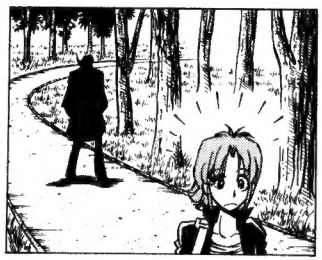
.....
THANK YOU FOR COMING OUT TO MEET WITH ME.
YOU'RE GORO AYASE, RIGHT?

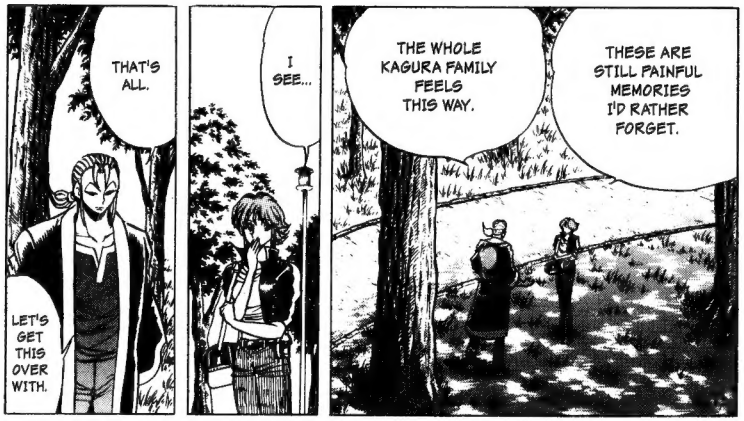
WHY DON'T WE GO SOME-WHERE TO TALK?
THAT'S RIGHT! GLAD TO MEET YOU...

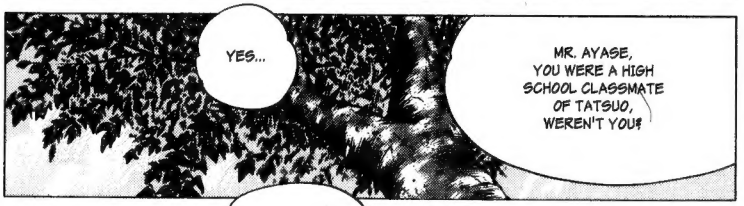
SO YOU'RE A REPORTER?
SATSUKI KATSURUGAWA FROM WEEKLY PEOPLE.

I SAW A LITTLE COFFEE SHOP JUST DOWN THE ROAD.





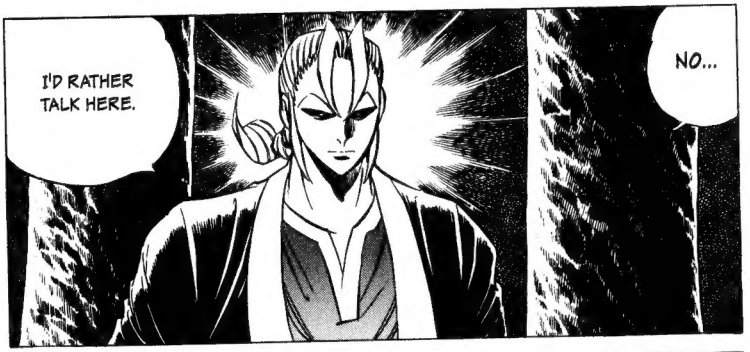

THAT'S ALL.
LET'S GET THIS OVER WITH.
I SEE...
THE WHOLE KAGURA FAMILY FEELS THIS WAY.
THESE ARE STILL PAINFUL MEMORIES I'D RATHER FORGET.

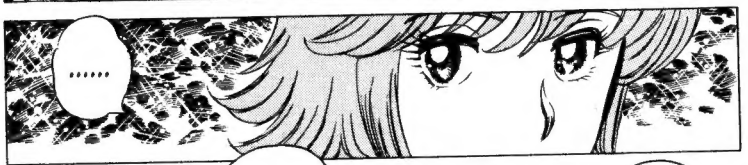

YES...
MR. AYASE, YOU WERE A HIGH SCHOOL CLASSMATE OF TATSUO, WEREN'T YOU?

WERE YOU TWO CLOSE?

.....

HE...
TATSUO...


I'D RATHER TALK HERE.
NO...


.....

BUT, BEFORE WE START, LET ME MAKE ONE THING CLEAR...
SURE, IF YOU SAY SO,

AND NEVER BRING UP TATSUO AGAIN.
FROM NOW ON, PLEASE STOP CALLING ME HERE.

EVERY TIME I LOST TO HIM, I GOT ANGRIER.
FRANKLY, I WAS JEALOUS. I CONSIDERED HIM MY RIVAL.
I WAS OBSESSED WITH BEATING HIM... I HAD TO BEAT HIM!
I WANTED TO TAKE EVERYTHING HE HAD.
STILL HASN'T GOTTEN OVER IT.
THIS GUY
OH, BOY.
NYAH H!

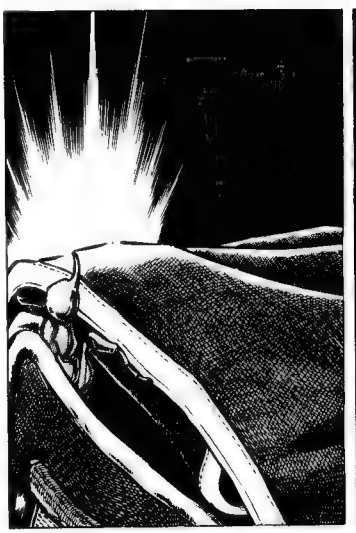
EVERYONE WORSHIPPED HIM... THE WHOLE SCHOOL WAS IN AWE OF HIM.
HE WAS THE STAR PUPIL OF EVERY TEACHER HE HAD.
IN ACADEMICS OR ATHLETICS.
NO ONE COULD MATCH HIM.
HE ALWAYS STOOD HEAD AND SHOULDERS ABOVE EVERYONE ELSE...
HE WAS ALWAYS...
HE HAD HARDLY ANYONE HE COULD CALL A FRIEND.
AND THAT'S WHY HE WAS ALWAYS ALONE.
WHAT ABOUT YOU?
I...
ME?

AND IT WAS DEFINITELY MOVING!
NO, IT WAS A SCORPION!
NO, JUST A MOLTED SHELL.
IS THAT A CICADA NYMPH...?
THERE ARE A LOT OF THESE AROUND HERE.
WELL, IT LOOKS A BIT LIKE ONE.
MAYBE IT WAS THIS THING.
AM I SEEING THINGS?
THAT'S STRANGE...
WELL... THERE'S NOTHING HERE NOW.
BUT OF COURSE IT CAN'T MOVE.
THE EMPTY SHELL IS AMAZINGLY LIFELIKE.
AT FIRST GLANCE, IT LOOKS LIKE IT'S ALIVE.
...DOESN'T MOVE!
THE CAST OFF SHELL...
NO IT CAN'T... CAN IT.

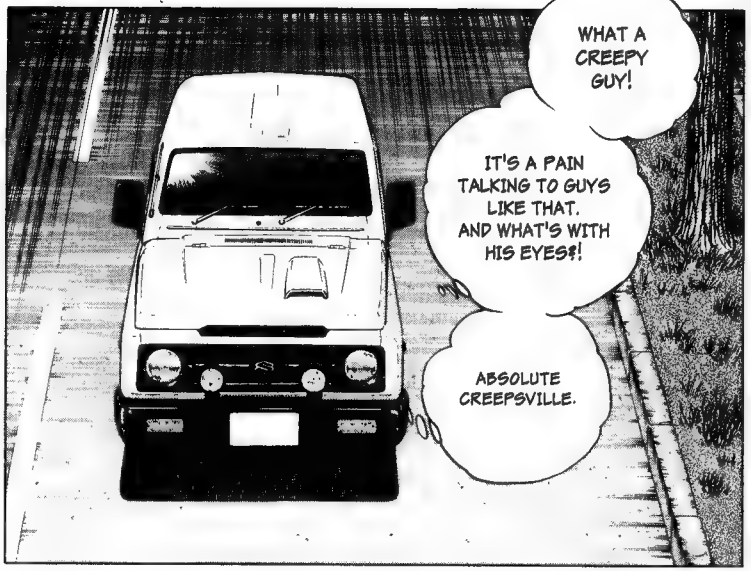
SCORPION!
A SCORPION!
I SAW A SCORPION!
YOU MUST BE MISTAKEN.
THERE ARE NO SCORPIONS IN JAPAN.

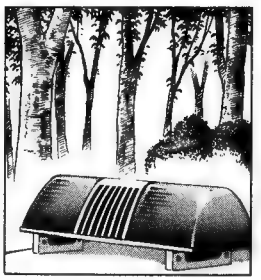
NO.
DO YOU HAVE A CELL PHONE NUMBER?
THANKS FOR THE INTERVIEW. SORRY TO CUT IT SHORT, BUT SOMETHING'S COME UP.
I'LL BE WAIT-ING...
YOU CAN CATCH ME TOMORROW AFTERNOON.
.....
THEN CAN YOU CALL ME?
WHAT? HOW CAN YOU NOT HAVE ONE THESE DAYS? WELL...
Since you don't want me calling you.

UH...
OH... UH, EXCUSE ME.
.....

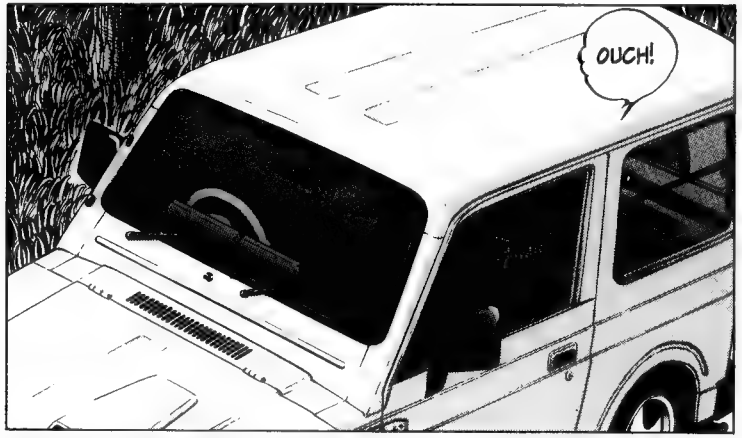


HEH...


WHAT A CREEPY GUY!
IT'S A PAIN TALKING TO GUYS LIKE THAT. AND WHAT'S WITH HIS EYES?!
ABSOLUTE CREEPSVILLE.

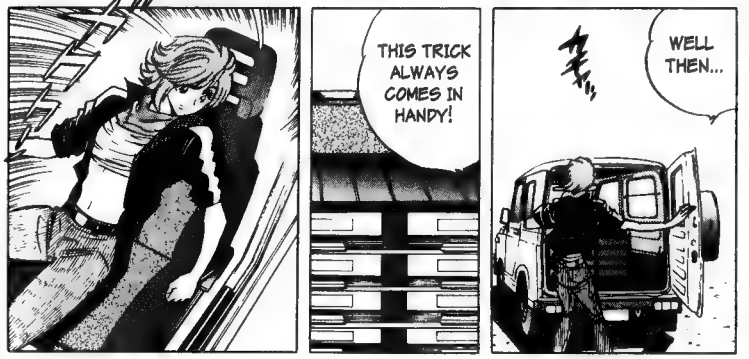


I DON'T THINK THEY WERE JUST A COUPLE OF SQUATTERS.
WE SEARCHED THE ENTIRE PLACE, AND ONLY FOUND THE TWO BODIES.
BUT WHAT WERE THOSE FREAKS?
ONE OF 'EM HAD ITS ARMS AND LEGS TORN OFF, AND THE OTHER ONE HAD MORE THAN TWO ARMS!
MAYBE IT WAS SOME KIND OF RITUAL...
A CULT KILLING OR SOMETHING.


OUCH!

I'M READY!

UH-OH... LOOKS LIKE I CAN'T JUST WALK IN...


THIS TRICK ALWAYS COMES IN HANDY!
WELL THEN...

OH, BOY!
HMM...

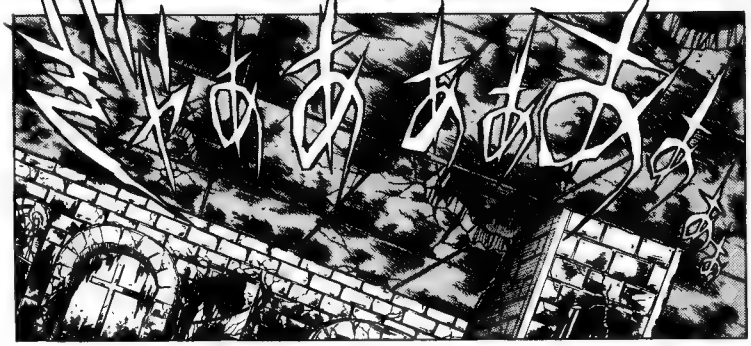
LET'S SEE...
WHAT'S THIS?
WHAT IS ALL THIS WEIRD SHIT?
THIS IS NO ORDINARY CHURCH!

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
I WONDER IF WE SAW SOMETHING WE SHOULDN'T HAVE SEEN.
YEAH...
THIS CASE SMELLS... I MEAN IT REALLY STINKS.
YEAH...
I MEAN THOSE BODIES, AND THIS LAB. WHOEVER'S BEHIND THIS'S GOT MONEY AND INFLUENCE.
I DON'T WANNA GET SQUASHED IN SOME COVER-UP. AND WHAT'S WITH THAT ONE BODY, THE ONE WITH THE HELMET FUSED ONTO HIS HEAD?

BODY WITH A HELMET...?
HAVE THEY HAULED IT OUT ALREADY?
AHH?!
HEY, GUYS?
WHAT'S GOING ON?
THEY WERE HAULIN' OUT THOSE CORPSES.
HM?
WELL, LET'S GO FILE OUR REPORT.

THEY'RE EVERY-WHERE!
AAGH!
WHA ...?!

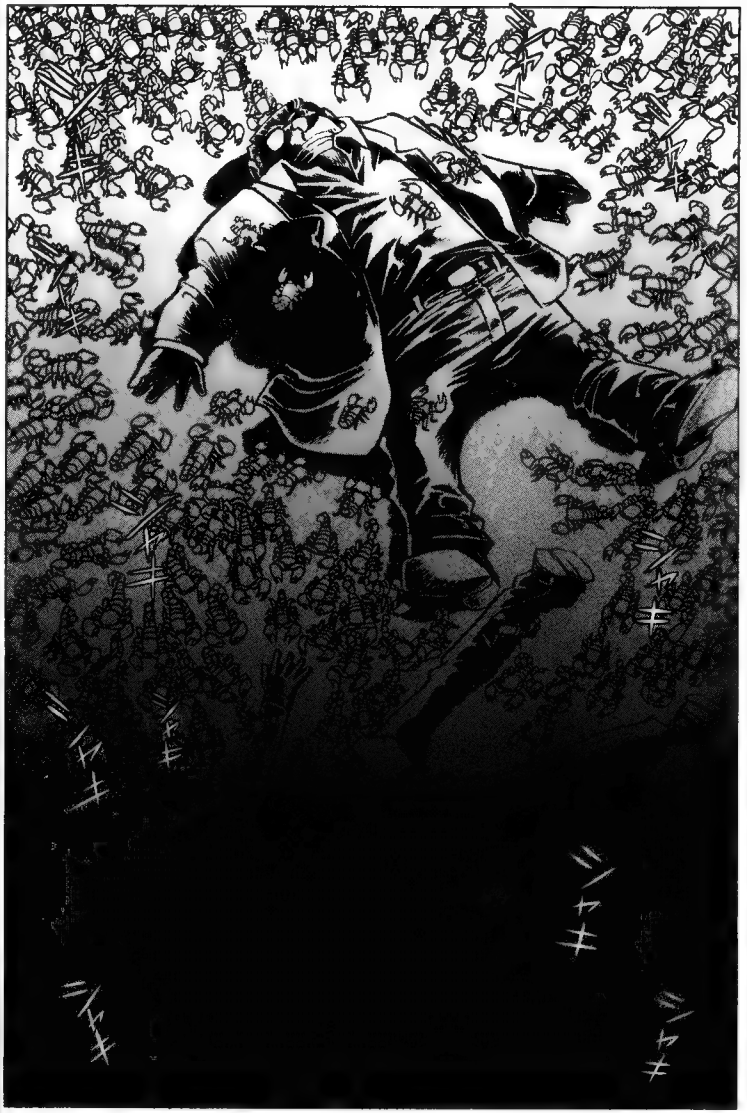
OVER, HERE TOO!!



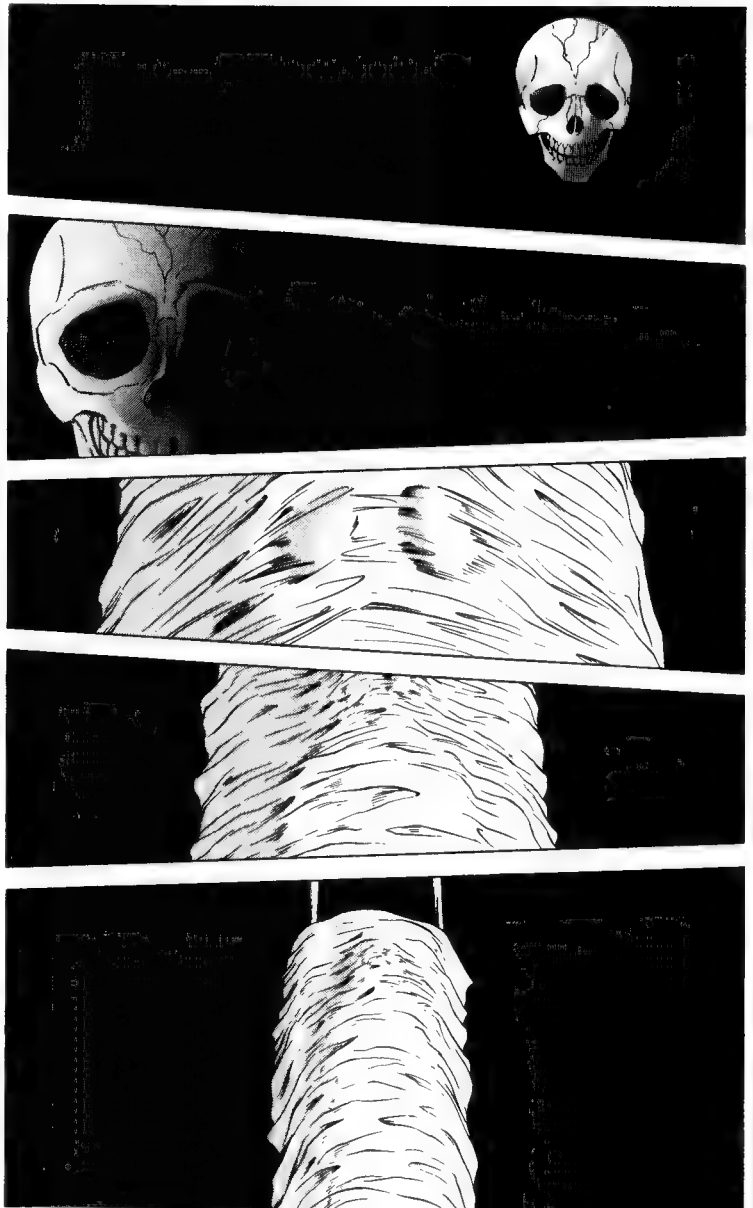
OWWW!!
AGGGHH!!
WHA ...?!

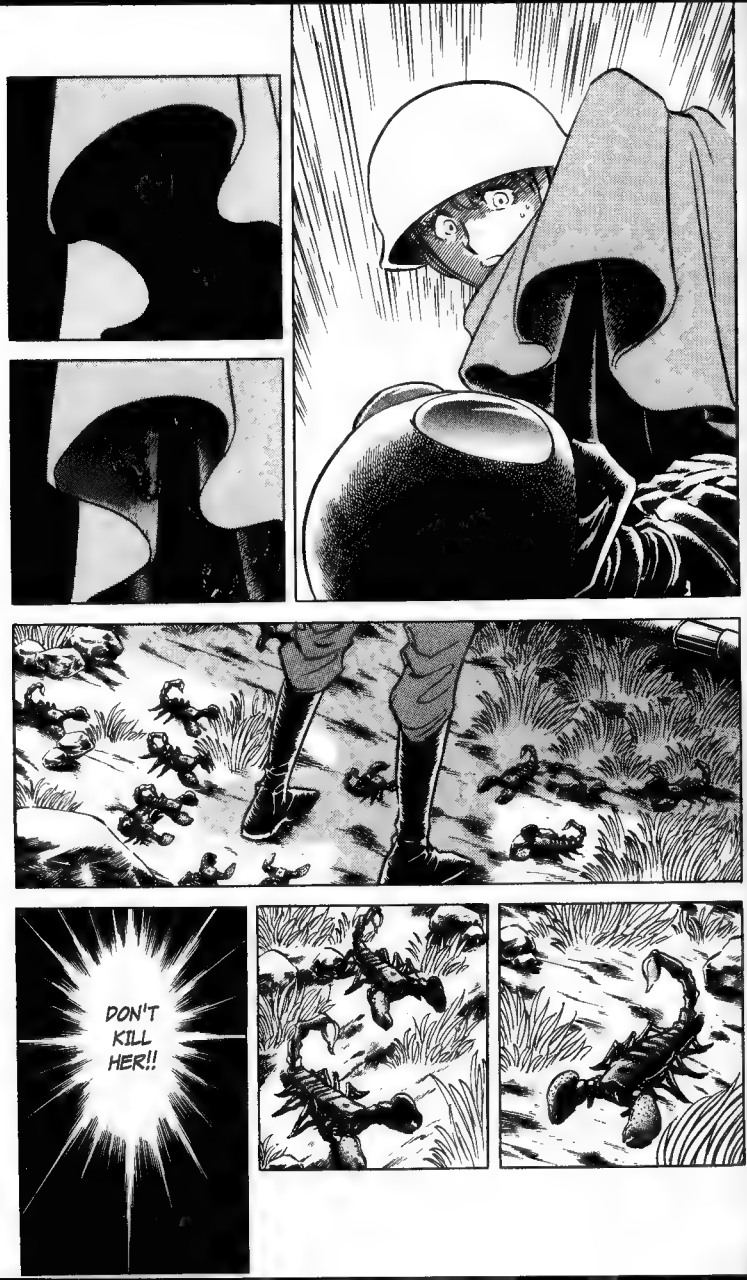
A-A-A
SCORPION!!

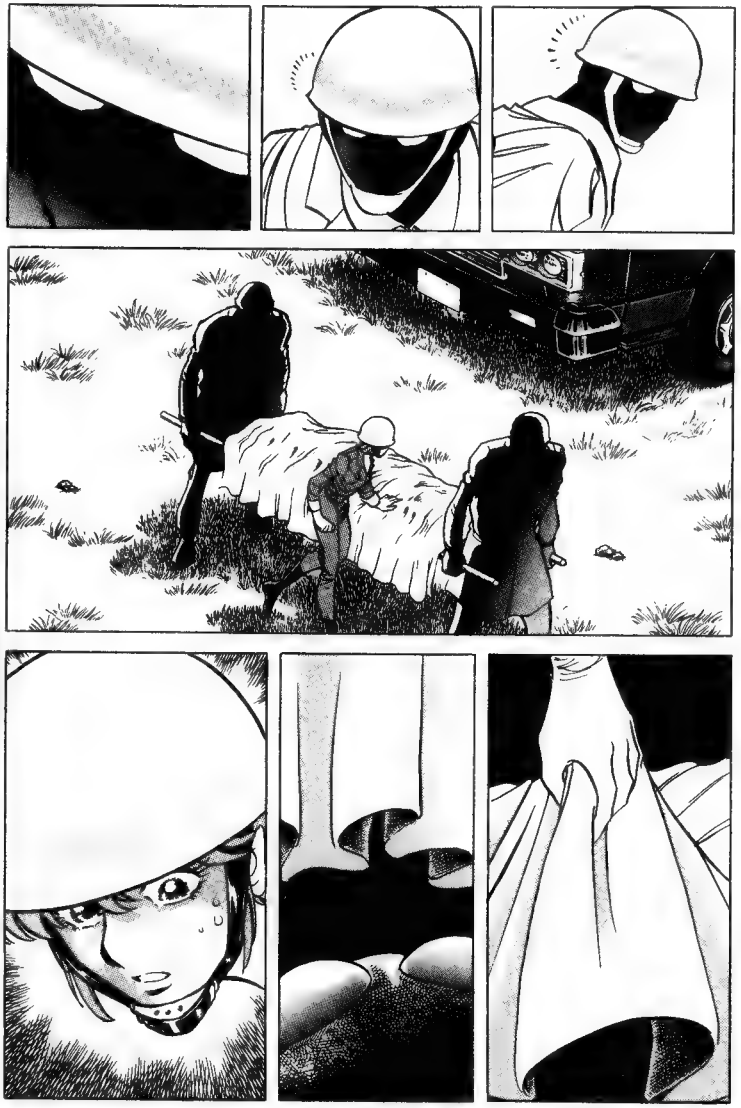
9 デス・スコーピオン
DEATH SCORPION



HEY, WAIT!




DON'T KILL HER!!

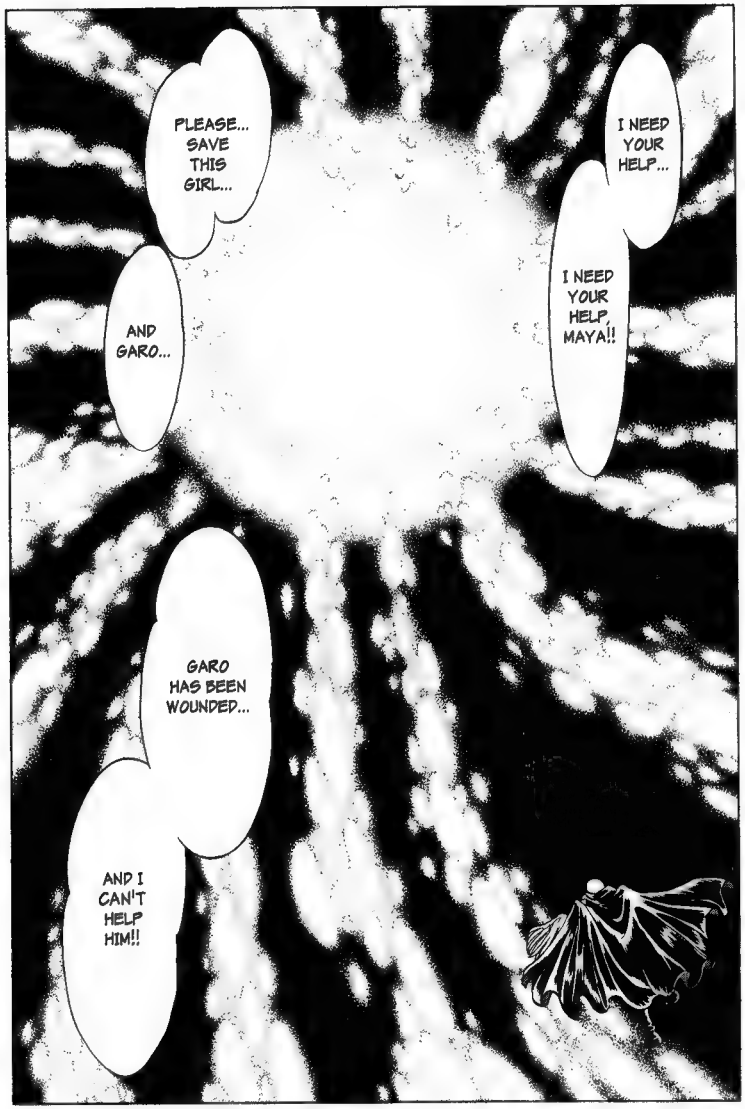


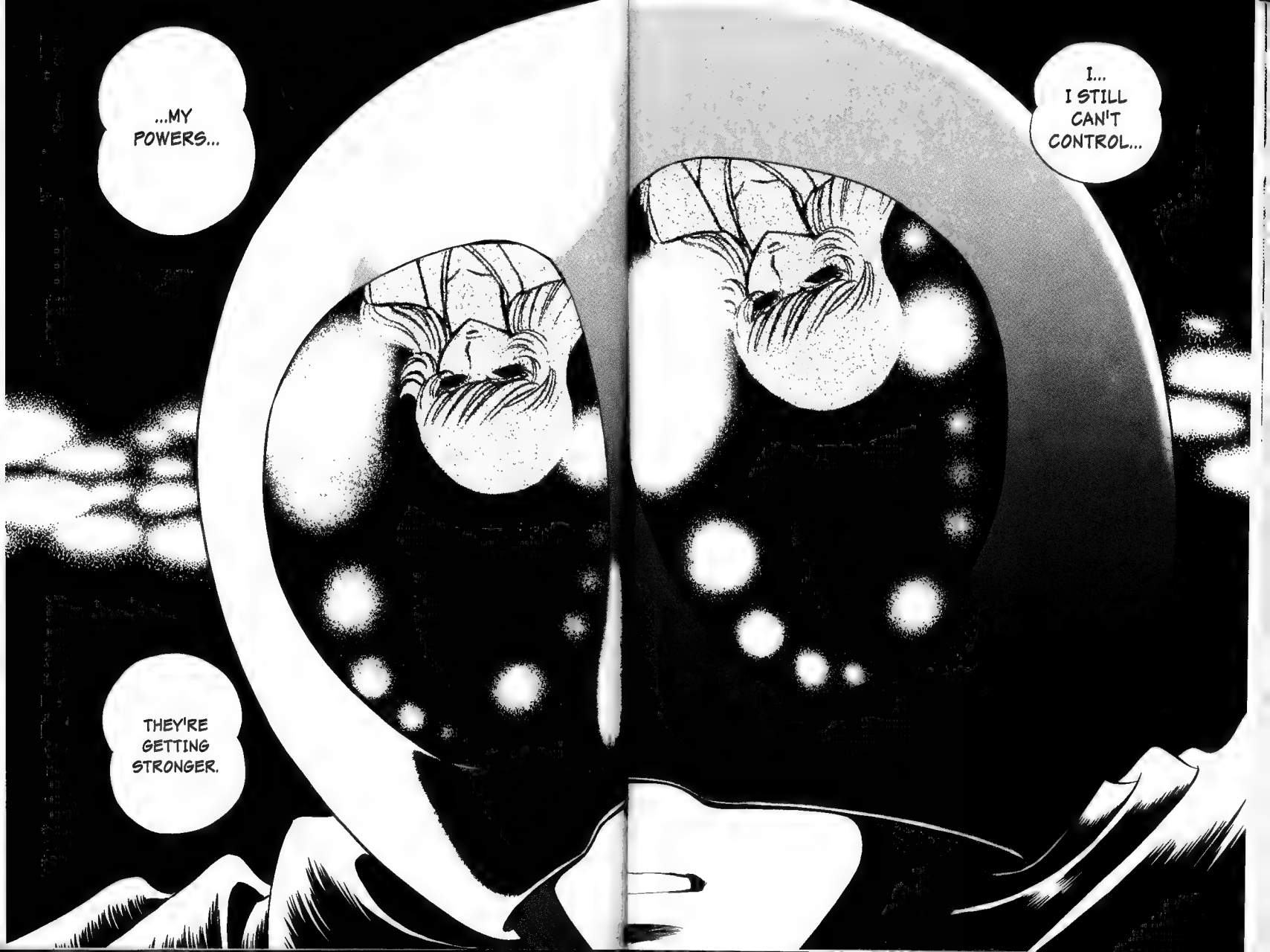
DON'T KILL HER.
BUT,
DON'T LET HER SEE YOU!
I CAN STILL USE HER!!

CAN HE REALLY BE DEAD?!
HIS PARENTS WERE KILLED BY HIS GRANDFATHER.
DRIVEN BY HIS OBSESSION FOR REVENGE HE BECAME SKULL MAN.
A MASS MURDERER...
TATSUO KAGURA IS DEAD!!

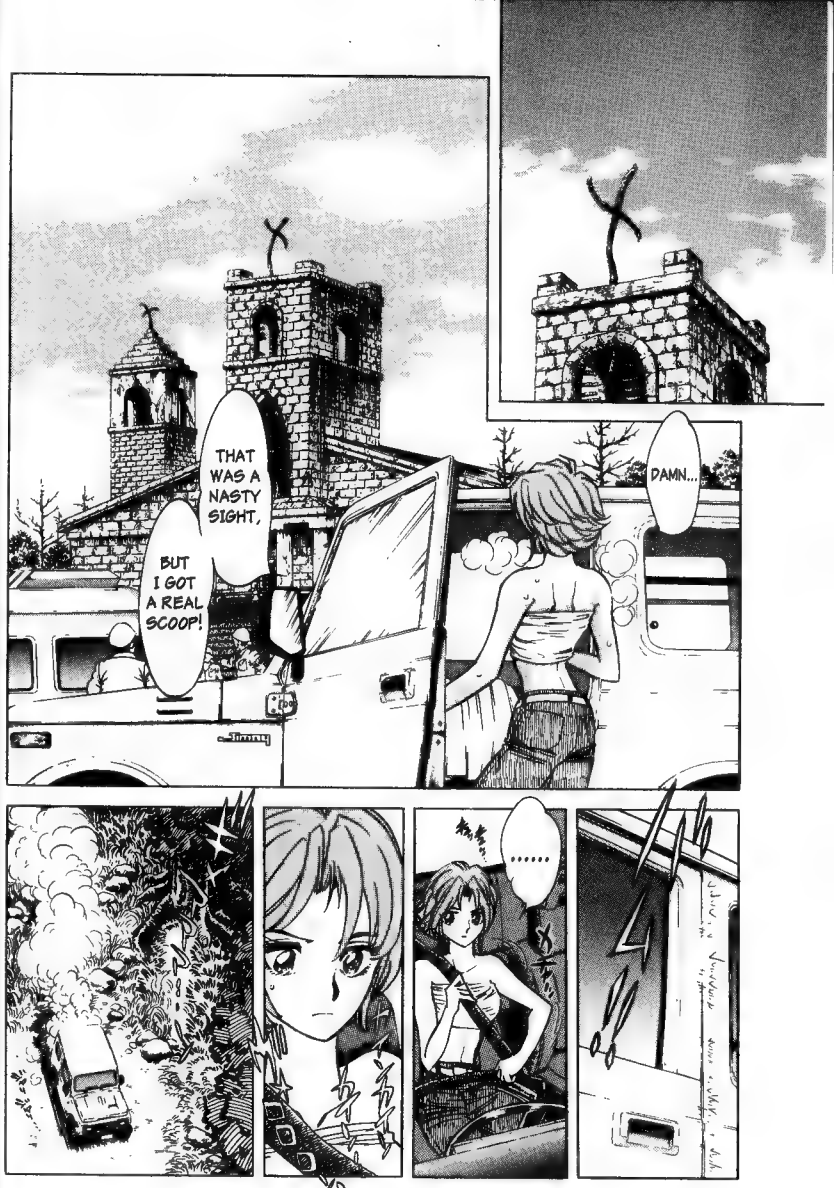
HE'S DEAD?
THE SKULL... MAN...
T-T- TATSUO... KAGURA...

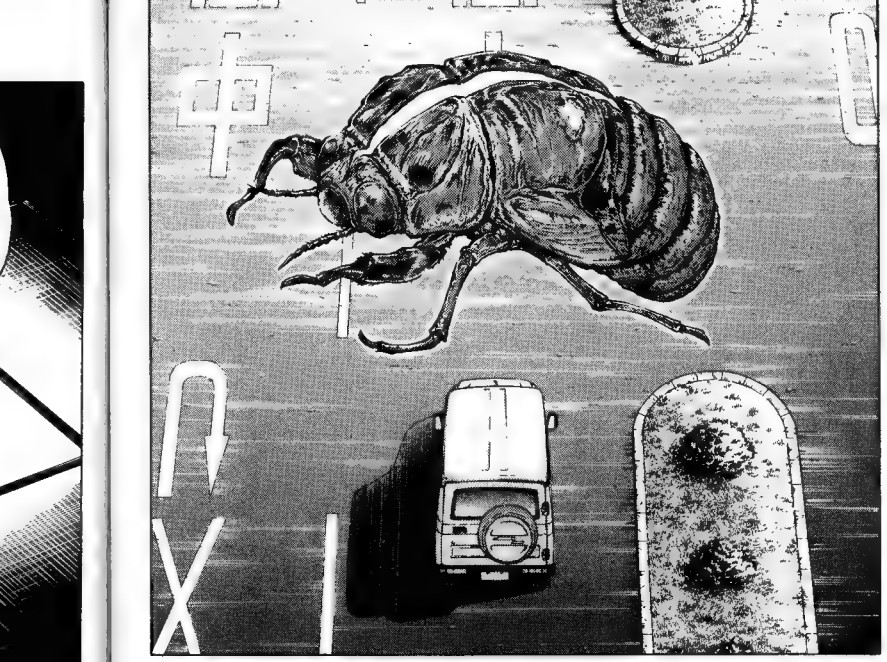
MAYA...
MAYA...
MAYA!!

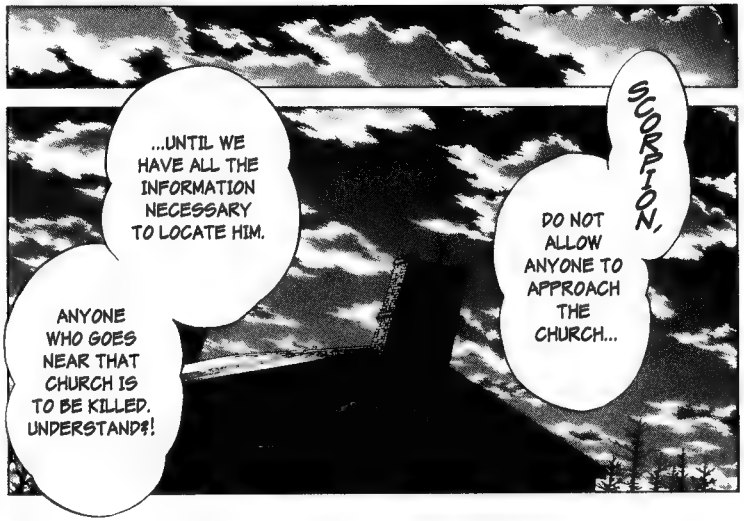

PLEASE... SAVE THIS GIRL...
I NEED YOUR HELP...
AND GARO...
I NEED YOUR HELP, MAYA!!
GARO HAS BEEN WOUNDED...
AND I CAN'T HELP HIM!!

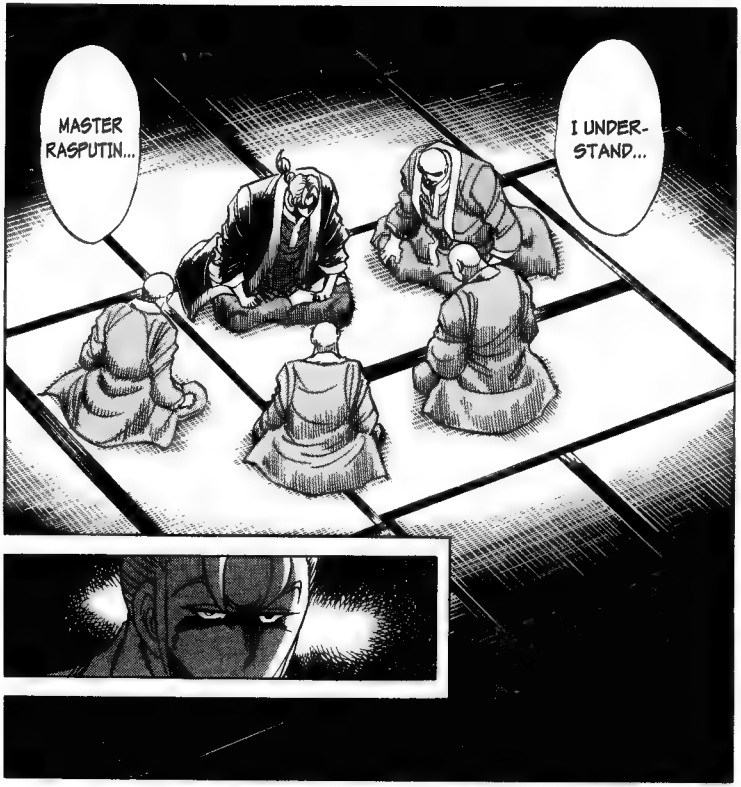

...MY POWERS...
THEY'RE GETTING STRONGER.
I... I STILL CAN'T CONTROL...

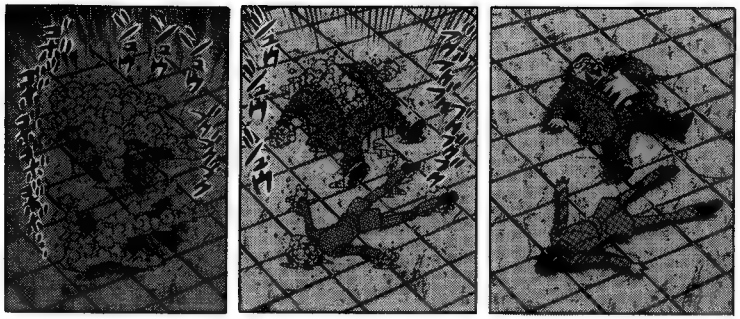
BUT...
I DON'T BELIEVE HE'S DEAD!
TATSUO KAGURA... THE SKULL MAN... HE'S STILL ALIVE!
I DON'T CARE
WHAT I SAW.
A BODY WITH A HELMET. COULD'VE BEEN ANYONE.
OR...
"AN EMPTY SHELL..."
"BUT A CAST-OFF SHELL DOESN'T MOVE"...!

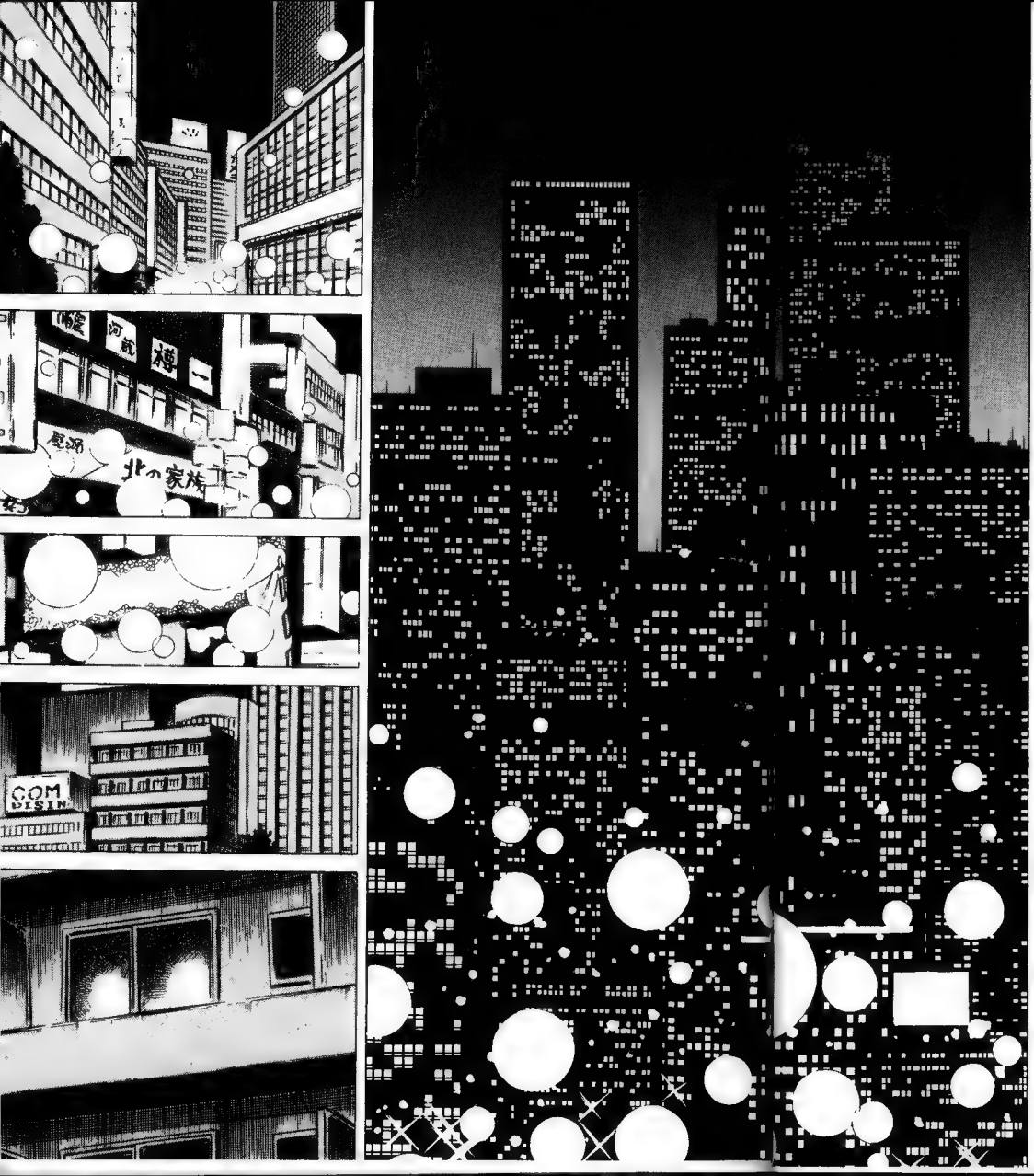

DAMN...
THAT WAS A NASTY SIGHT,
BUT I GOT A REAL SCOOP!
.....

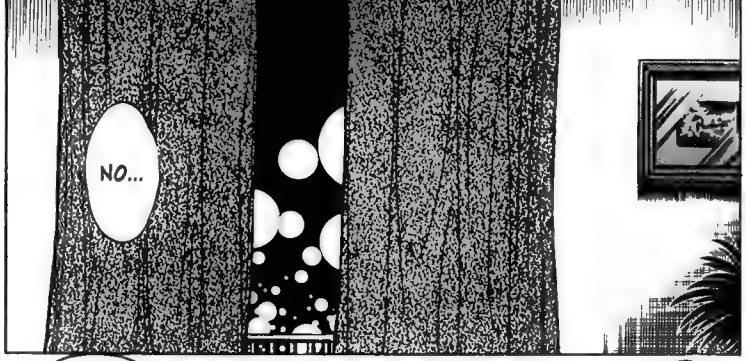


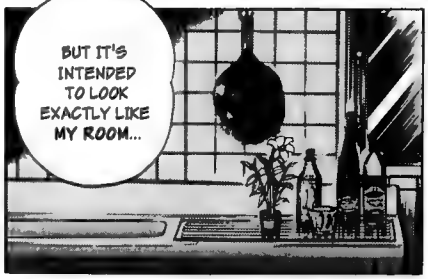

SCORPION,
DO NOT ALLOW ANYONE TO APPROACH THE CHURCH...
...UNTIL WE HAVE ALL THE INFORMATION NECESSARY TO LOCATE HIM.
ANYONE WHO GOES NEAR THAT CHURCH IS TO BE KILLED. UNDERSTAND?!


MASTER RASPUTIN...
I UNDER-STAND...

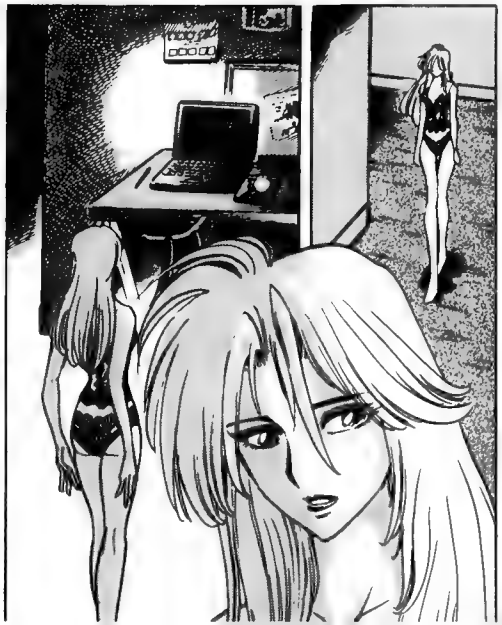


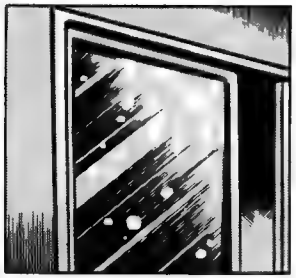

北の家族
COM
DISIN

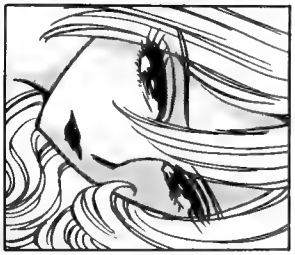

NO...


BUT IT'S INTENDED TO LOOK EXACTLY LIKE MY ROOM...

IT'S DIFFERENT...







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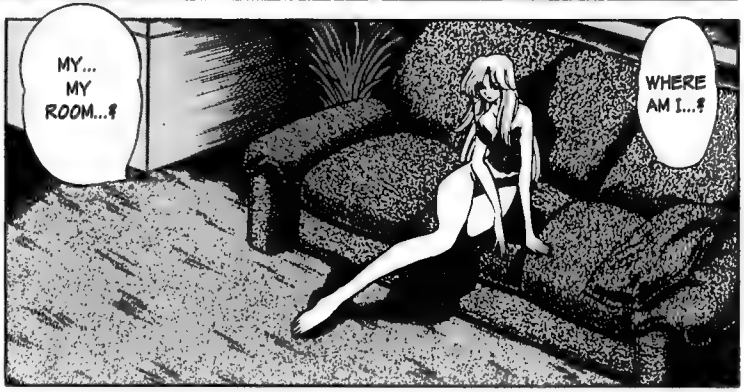
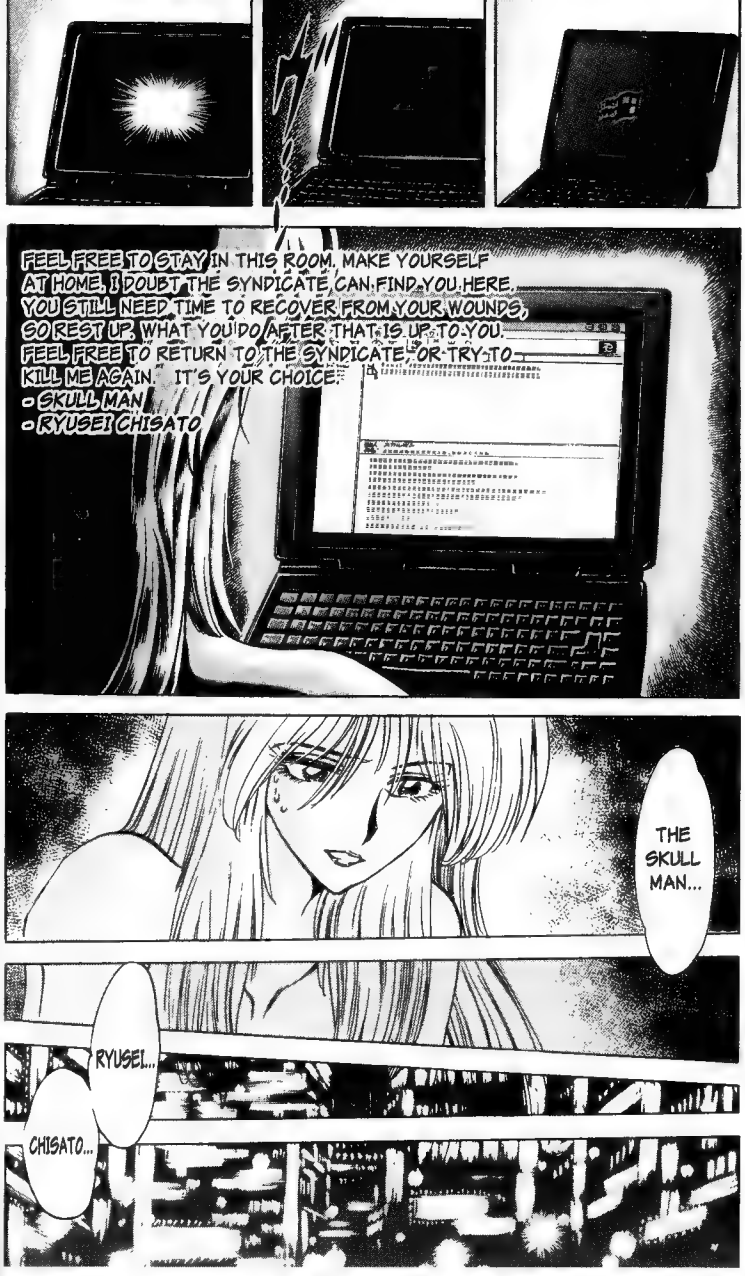
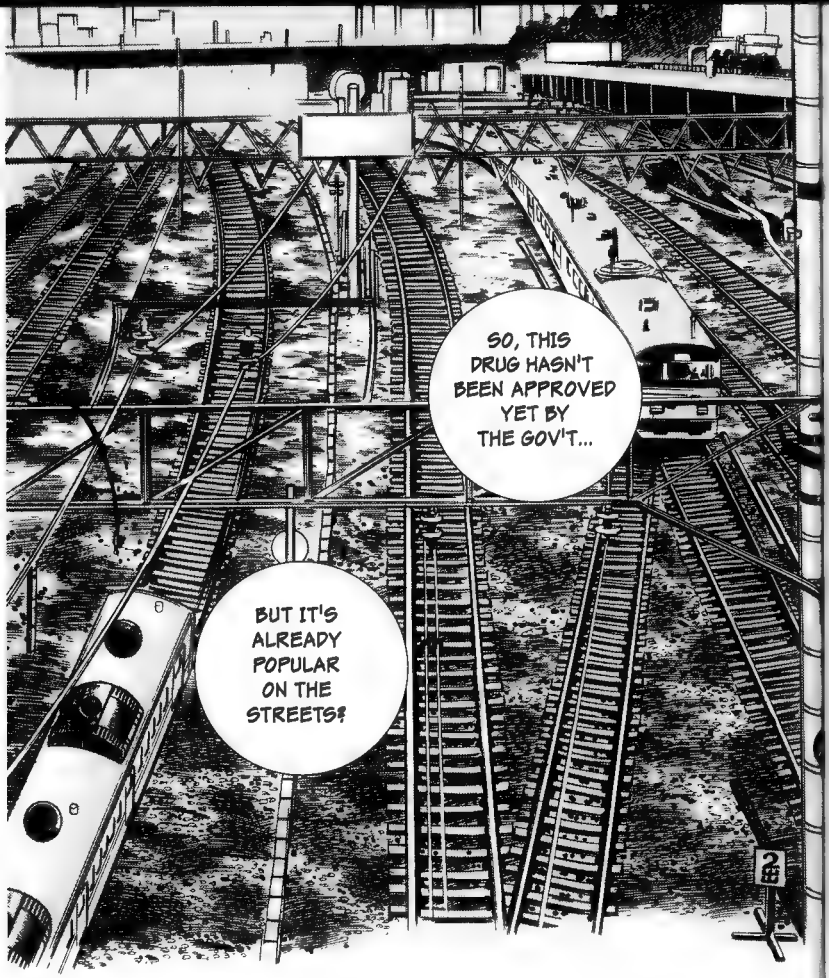

MY... MY ROOM...?
WHERE AM I...?

AS I SUSPECTED. ABSOLUTELY NO NEWS ON THAT FIRE.
BUT THE POLICE DON'T SEEM TO BE HIDING ANYTHING. IT'S LIKE THEY NEVER EVEN KNEW ABOUT IT TO BEGIN WITH.
HOW? THERE WERE SO MANY SQUAD CARS AND AMBULANCES THERE.
WHAT HAPPENED TO ALL THE COPS ON THE SCENE?
AND WHAT HAPPENED TO SKULL MAN AND THE OTHER BODY?


FEEL FREE TO STAY IN THIS ROOM. MAKE YOURSELF AT HOME. I DOUBT THE SYNDICATE CAN FIND YOU HERE. YOU STILL NEED TIME TO RECOVER FROM YOUR WOUNDS, SO REST UP. WHAT YOU DO AFTER THAT IS UP TO YOU. FEEL FREE TO RETURN TO THE SYNDICATE, OR TRY TO KILL ME AGAIN. IT'S YOUR CHOICE.
- SKULL MAN
- RYUSEI CHISATO
THE SKULL MAN...
RYUSEI...
CHISATO...



10 スカルマン現わる
SKULL MAN EMERGES

HMM?
WHOA!
YO, WHAT'S UP?!
OOPS, SORRY!
HEY, HEY, HEY!

AND YOU HAVE THE NERVE TO TRY TO KNOCK ME DOWN?!
HEY, THAT WAS NO ACCIDENT. STOP FEELING ME UP!

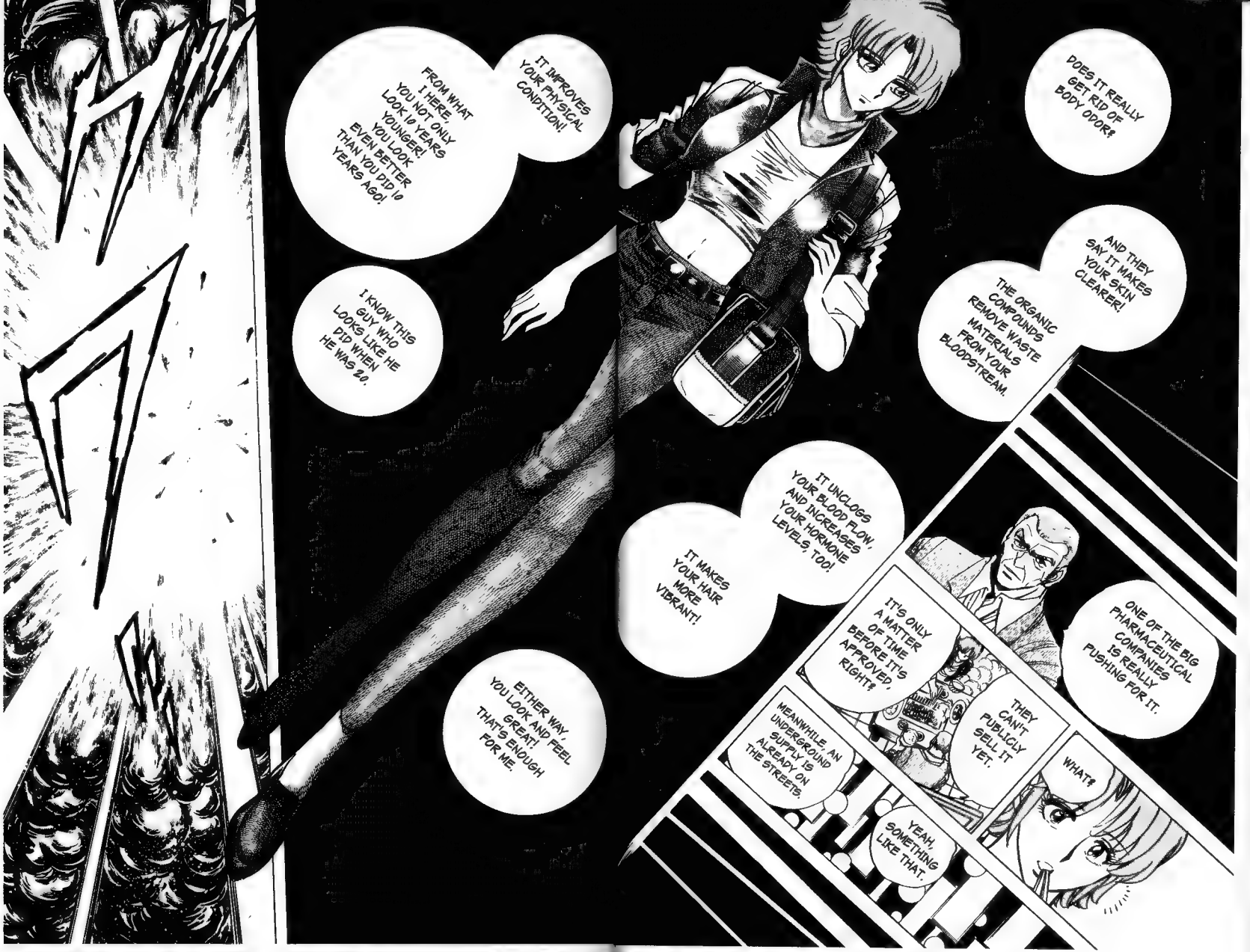
LET ME THROUGH!
WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?!

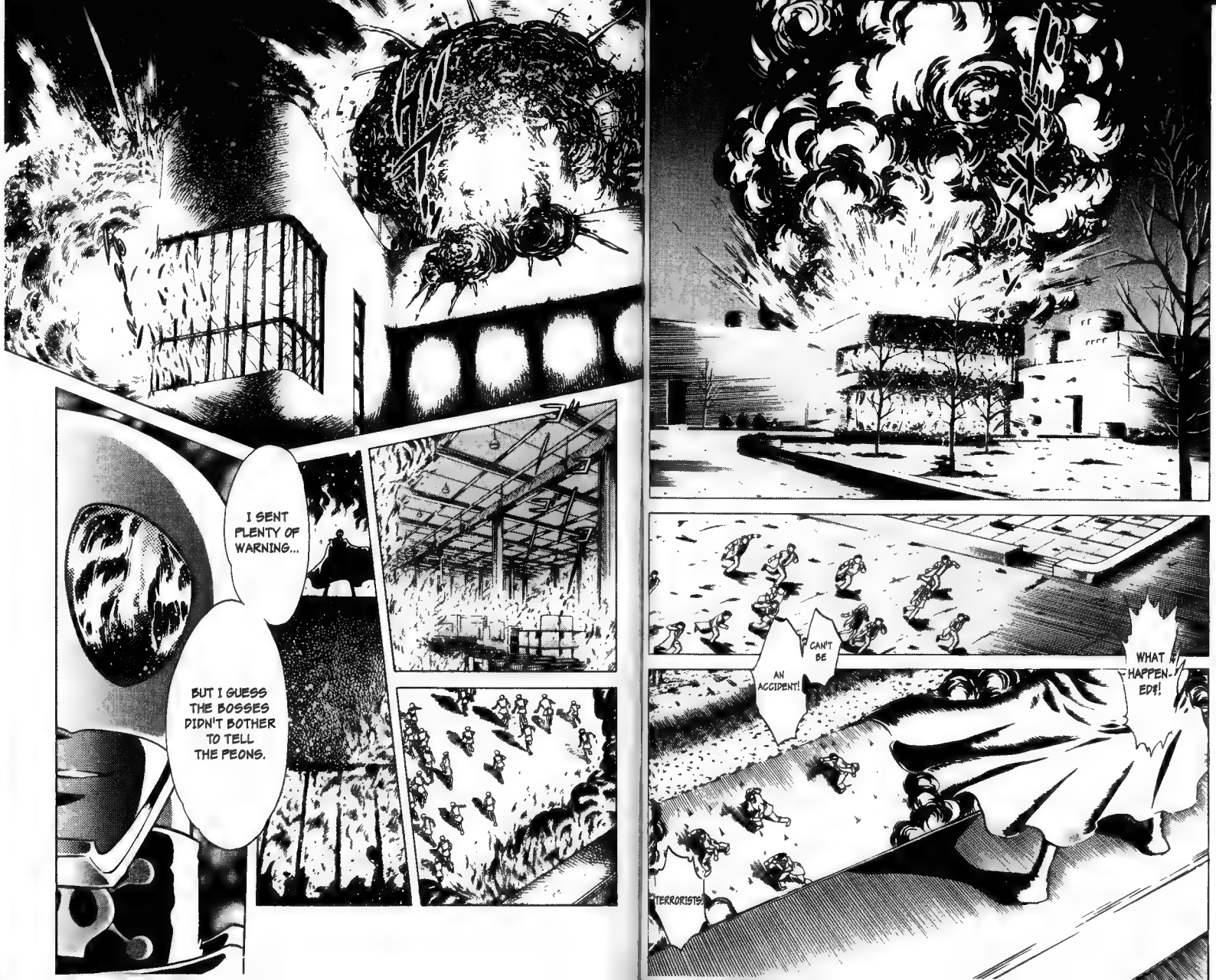
.....
.....
.....
NOTHING
YET!
SHINJUKI STATION, SHINJUKU!

TAKE...
...THAT, PIG!!

YOU ...!
WHAT HAPPENED?!
SHE CAUGHT A PERV!
...GODDAMN PERVERT!!
SOME-ONE CALL 9-1-1!

I'M FINE!
ANYWAY, HE'S IN WORSE SHAPE THAN I AM.
BESIDES, I'M USED TO IT.
WOW! YOU WERE SO COOL!
THAT GUY WAS A TOTAL JERK... ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
YEAH, I GUESS SO.
THERE ARE MORE GUYS LIKE HIM EVERY DAY, SEEMS LIKE...
THIS FLYER LOOKS A LITTLE SHADY.
YOU MEAN THAT NEW NOT RIGHT DRUG.
HEY, HAVE YOU HEARD ABOUT THE STUFF?
YEAH, WELL IT'S NOT EXACTLY LEGAL.
I HEARD IT MAKES YOU REALLY HORNY!
CHRIST...
IT'S DRUGS LIKE THAT THAT PULL ALL THESE PERVS OUT OF THE WOOD WORK.
MAN, I GOTTA TRY SOME!
YEAH... IT CAN'T HURT TO TRY IT JUST ONCE.


DOES IT REALLY GET RID OF BODY ODOR?
AND THEY SAY IT MAKES YOUR SKIN CLEARER!
THE ORGANIC COMPOUNDS REMOVE WASTE MATERIALS FROM YOUR BLOODSTREAM.
ONE OF THE BIG PHARMACEUTICAL COMPANIES IS REALLY PUSHING FOR IT.
WHAT?
THEY CAN'T PUBLICLY SELL IT YET.
IT'S ONLY A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE IT'S APPROVED, RIGHT?
YEAH, SOMETHING LIKE THAT.
MEANWHILE, AN UNDERGROUND SUPPLY IS ALREADY ON THE STREETS.
IT UNCLOGS YOUR BLOOD FLOW, AND INCREASES YOUR HORMONE LEVELS, TOO!
IT MAKES YOUR HAIR MORE VIBRANT!
EITHER WAY, YOU LOOK AND FEEL GREAT! THAT'S ENOUGH FOR ME.
I KNOW THIS GUY WHO LOOKS LIKE HE DID WHEN HE WAS 20.
FROM WHAT I HERE, YOU NOT ONLY LOOK 10 YEARS YOUNGER! YOU LOOK EVEN BETTER THAN YOU DID 10 YEARS AGO!
IT IMPROVES YOUR PHYSICAL CONDITION!


I SENT PLENTY OF WARNING...
BUT I GUESS THE BOSSES DIDN'T BOTHER TO TELL THE PEONS.
WHAT HAPPENED?!
CAN'T BE AN ACCIDENT!
TERRORISTS!

WHO'S THAT?!

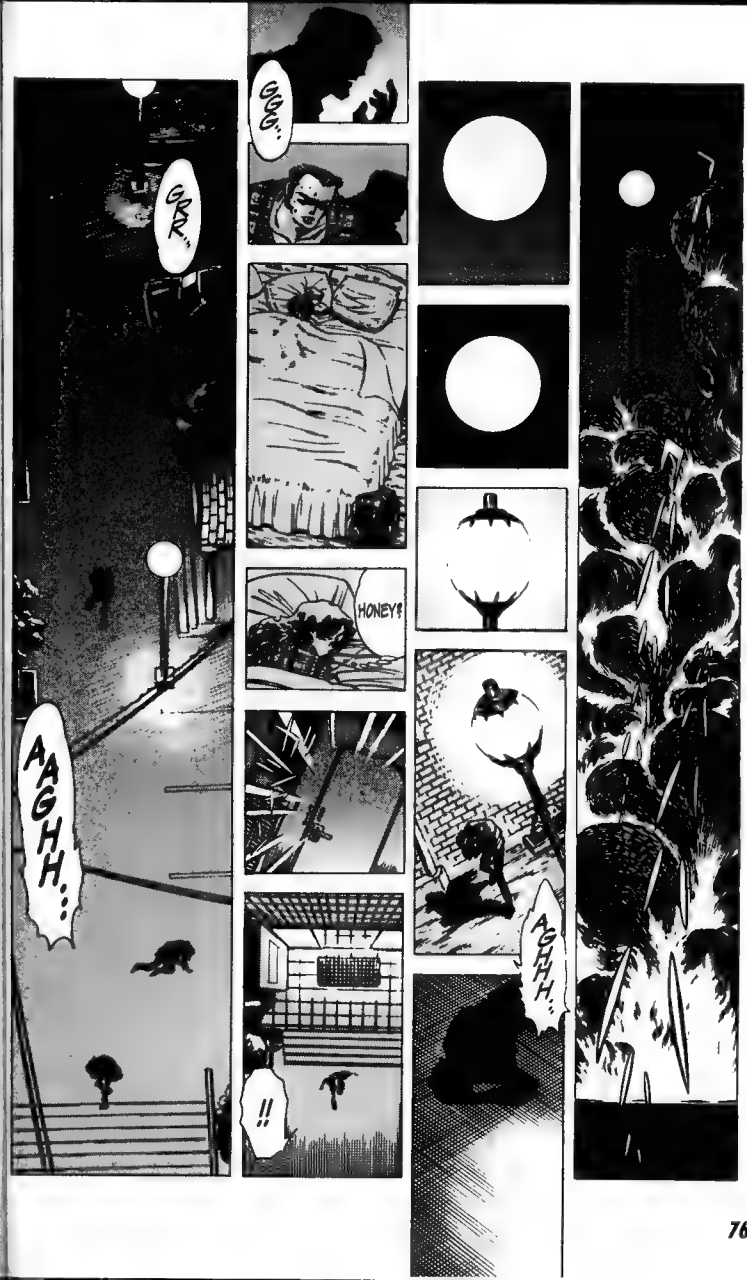
YES. I AM...
...SKULL MAN!!
SKULL...
...MAN!
THAT'S RIGHT!
I'VE COME FROM... THE LAND OF THE DEAD!!

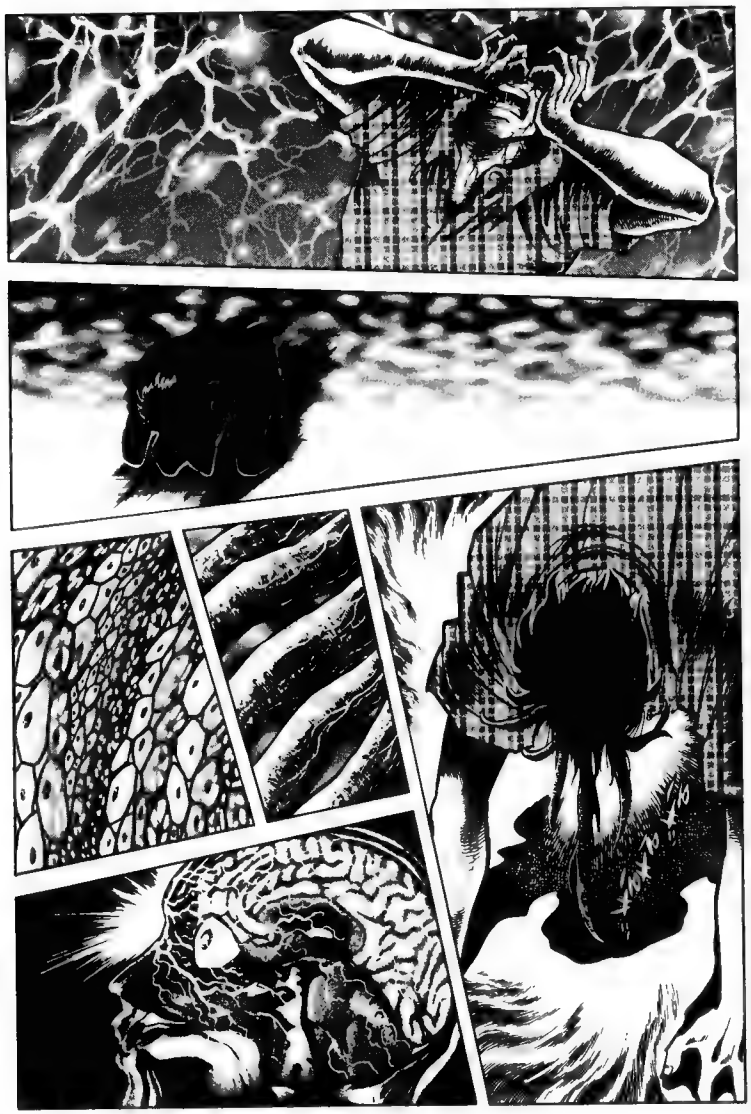
W-W-WHO ARE YOU?!
DID YOU DO THIS?!

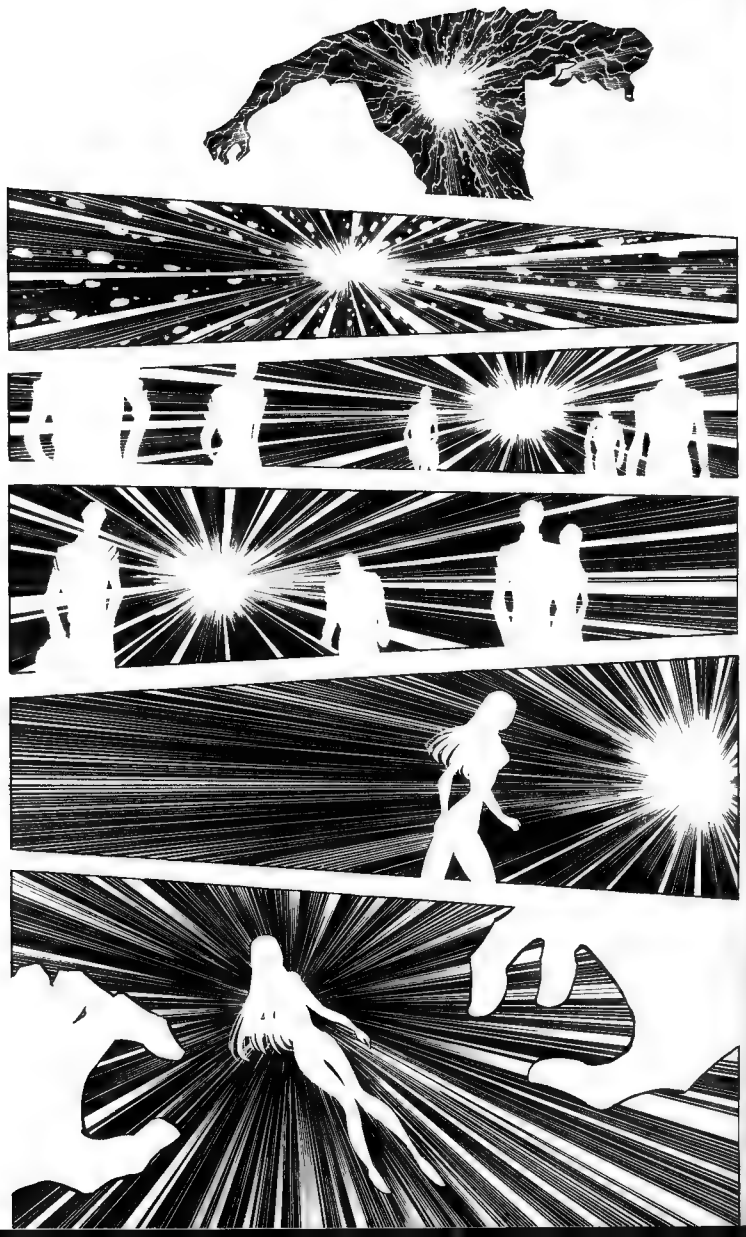
YOUR COMPANY CALLS IT "MEDICINE", BUT ITS REAL PURPOSE IS DEVILISHLY DIFFERENT!
NOT EVEN OUT YET, AND IT'S ALREADY THE RAGE.
NOW IF YOU DON'T MIND-- OR EVEN IF YOU DO-- I'M TAKING A FEW SAMPLES OF YOUR WONDER DRUG.

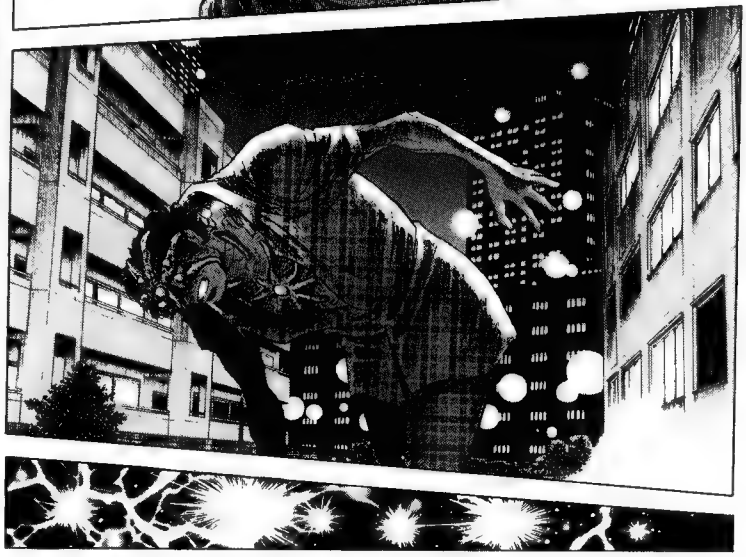
SKULL MAN!!
SKULL MAN...
SKULL MAN.
SKULL MAN...

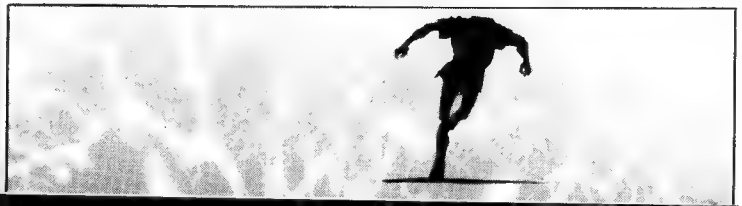
SKULL MAN


GGG..
GRR..
HONEY?
AAGHH..
!!
AGHH..









HOLD IT RIGHT THERE!
DON'T MOVE! I'VE GOT ROCKS IN MY PURSE, IN CASE YOU COULDN'T TELL.
I GUESS TODAY MUST BE "MEET THE PERVERTS DAY"!!

HUFF!
HUFF!
HUFF!
HELP ME!
AHHH!!

WHA...?!
HOW...?!
HOW CAN YOU NOT BE HURT?!
!!
.....
AGH..

YOU'RE A VALUABLE SPECIMEN...
I WON'T KILL YOU!!

DON'T WORRY...
GGG...

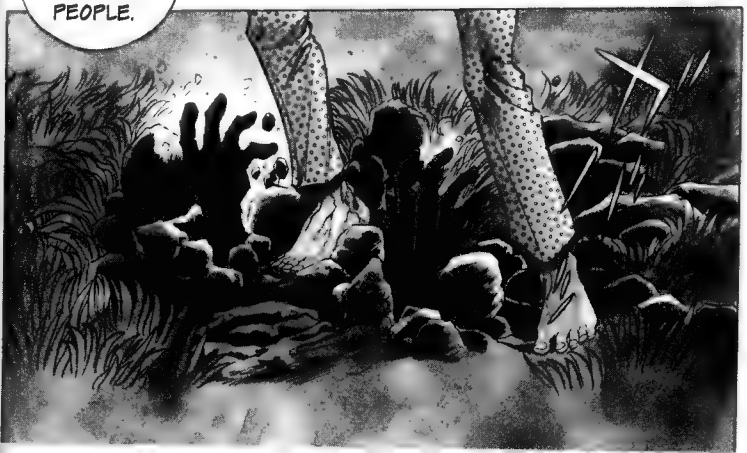
UGHH...
NNNH...

11 パラサイトグリーン PARASITE GREEN

GGAWAHHHH!!

GG,,
GGG,,

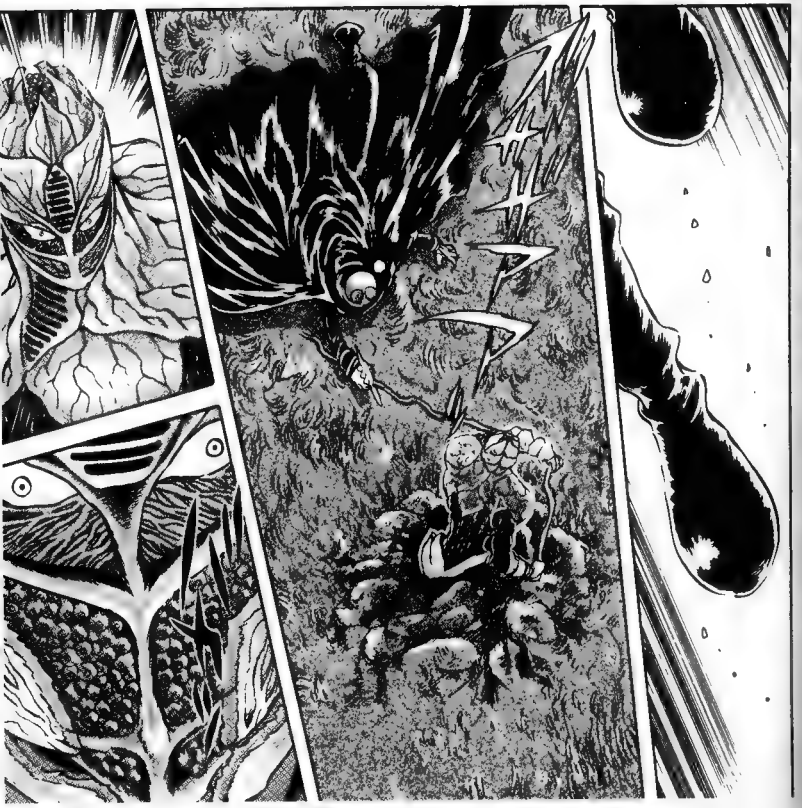
YOU'RE COMING WITH ME.
GO TO SLEEP.

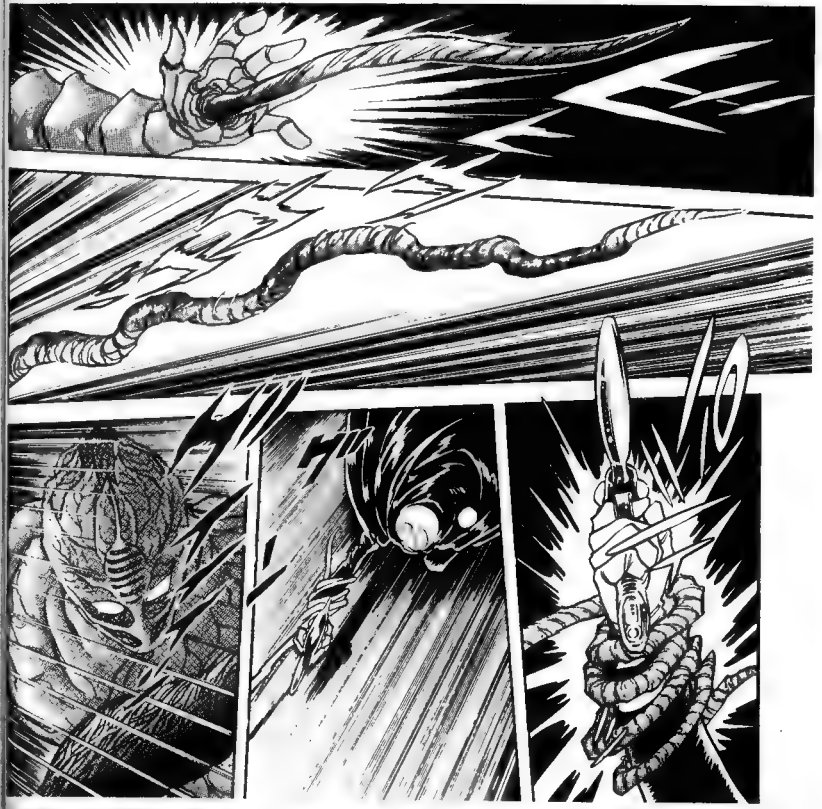

THIS IS HOW THE WONDER DRUG REALLY AFFECTS PEOPLE.

SORRY, BUT THIS BASTARD'S MINE!
SO...
YOU'RE THE SKULL MAN!!

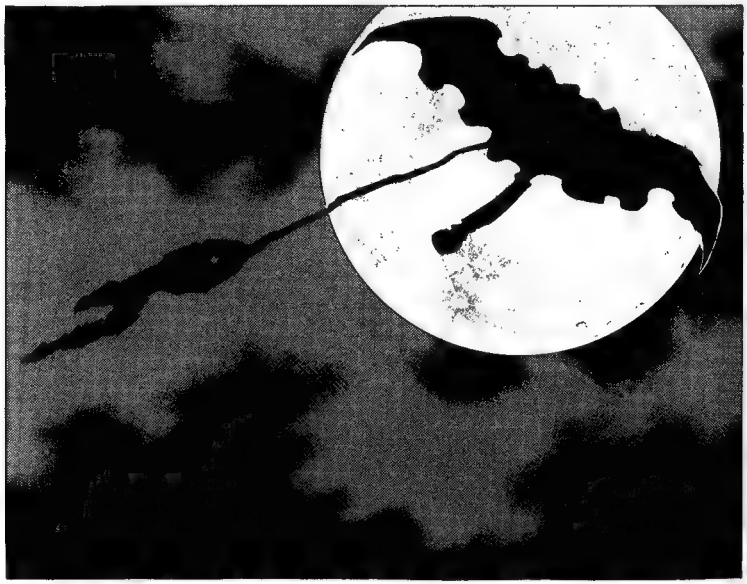
MY NAME IS PARASITE GREEN.
ME?

AHH, ONE OF THE BOSSES?





IT'S... SPORES!
THIS CLOUD...
WHAT?



HMM?!

GG...
HEH! DON'T MISTAKE ME FOR A COMMON MORTAL.
I BURNED ALIVE...
...INSIDE MY GRANDFATHER'S MANSION. AND SINCE I WAS RESURRECTED...
I'VE GOT POWERS THAT CONTINUE TO GROW.

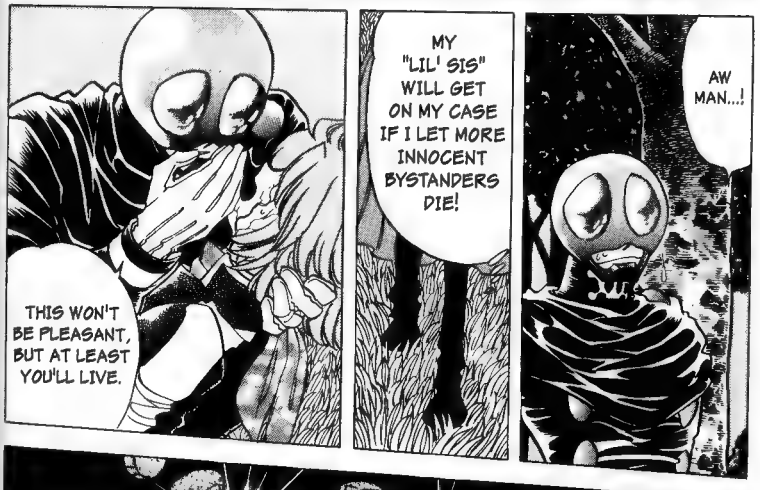
TSCH!
HE GOT AWAY.
OH WELL,

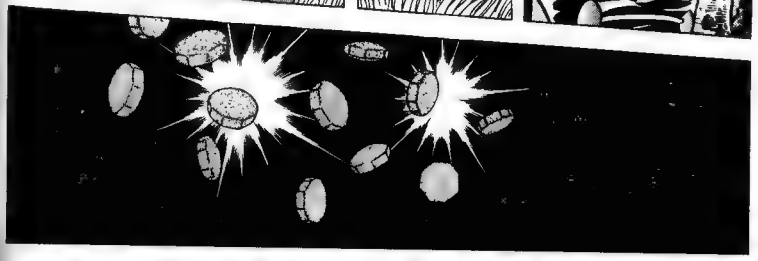
I CAN GUESS WHERE HE CAME FROM.

SHE MUST HAVE INHALED THOSE SPORES.
THEY WORK FAST.
HMM?
.....

THE THE THE
RAU RAU

UNHHHH...


THIS WON'T BE PLEASANT, BUT AT LEAST YOU'LL LIVE.
MY "LIL' SIS" WILL GET ON MY CASE IF I LET MORE INNOCENT BYSTANDERS DIE!
AW MAN...!



HMM...
WELL, I'LL BE.
I HAD IT ALL WRONG.
I HAD IT FIGURED THAT YOU WERE PUSHING THE DRUG TO TEST IT.
TO USE JOE PUBLIC AS YOUR GUINEA PIGS.
BUT THAT'S NOT IT.
YOU NEVER WANTED IT TO HIT THE STREETS!!

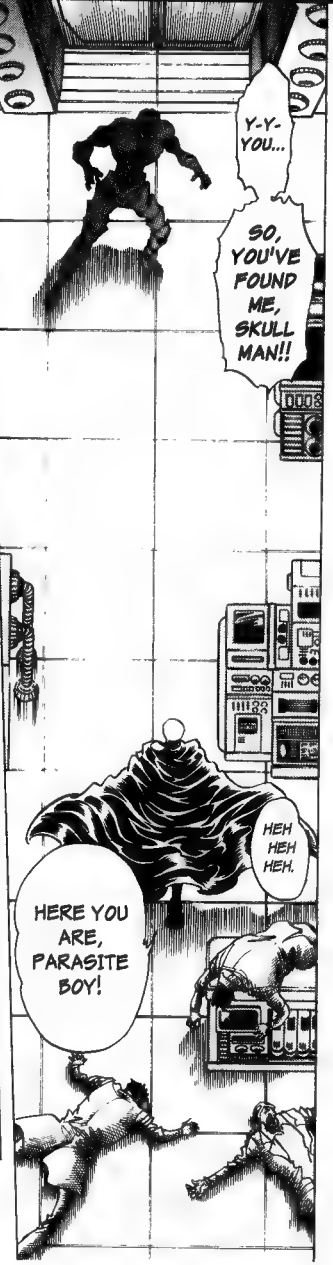
I'LL BET YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT IT.
THE LAB STAFF, THE WORKERS WHO PRODUCE THE SPORES BUT AREN'T ADDICTS...
AND THAT WAS SOMETHING YOU NEVER EXPECTED.
THEY SAW THE EFFECTS AND DECIDED TO CASH IN.
THEY'VE BEEN MAKING EXTRA AND SELLING IT ON THE STREETS.
BECAUSE THE REAL REASON FOR THE DRUG...

YOU WERE WORKING ON A PROJECT THAT YOU ABSOLUTELY COULD NOT AFFORD TO HAVE LEAKED!
LET ME GUESS...

WHO WON'T GET OLD OR SICK, OR HAVE PERSONAL LIVES LIKE REGULAR EMPLOYEES.
WORKERS WHO WILL NEVER QUIT. AND CAN NEVER EXPOSE YOUR SECRET.
IS TO CREATE SLAVES!

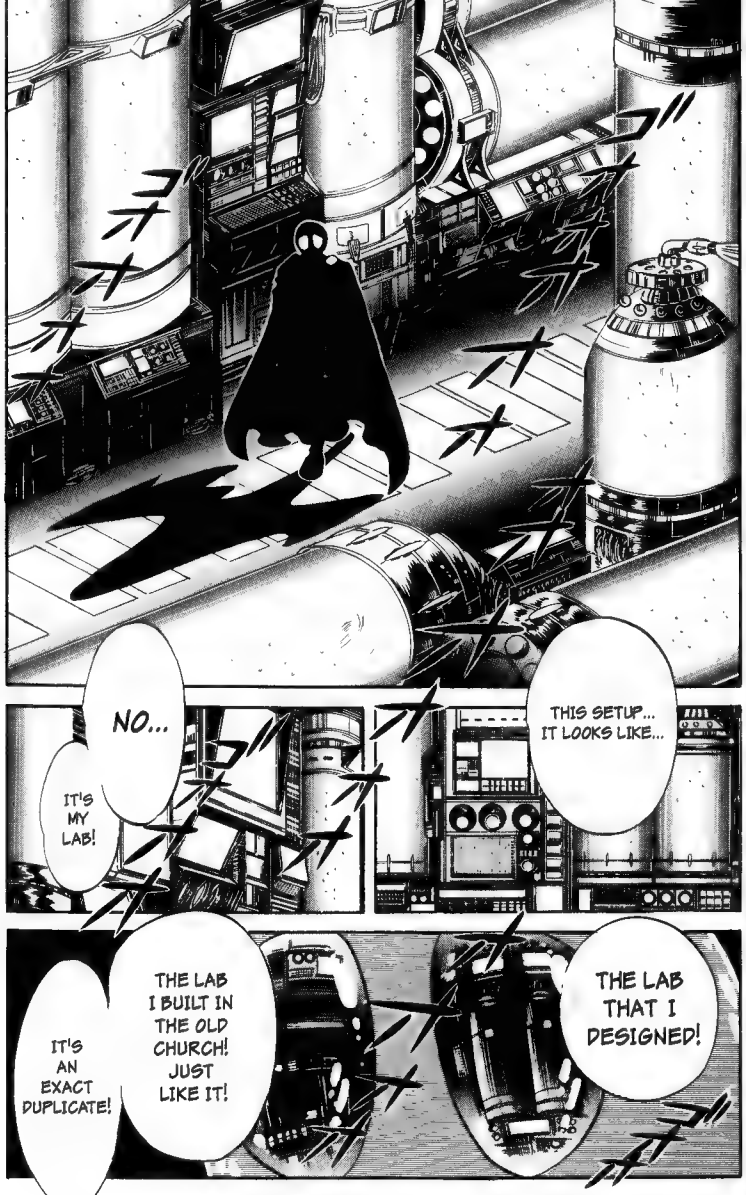
I CAN'T LET YOU THROUGH.
YOU AREN'T GETTING PAST ME!
I DON'T CARE WHO YOU ARE!
TAKE A REST, PARASITE.
YOU SEE...
THIS PLACE HAS JUST STOPPED BEING YOUR RESPON-SIBILITY.

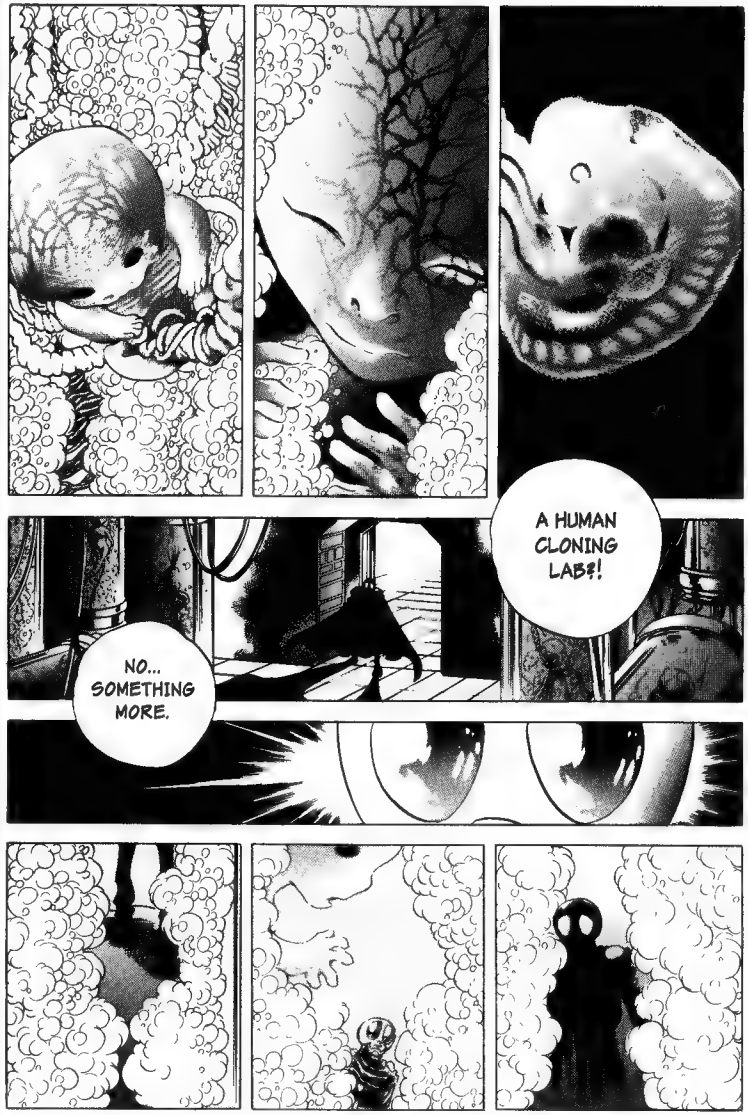
DAMMIT!
SO, THIS IS HOW YOU FIT IN...
EVERY NIGHT, YOU SEARCH OUT ADDICTS WHO'VE GONE OUT OF CONTROL...
...AND ELIMINATE THEM. IN ORDER TO PROTECT YOUR SECRET.


Y-Y-YOU...
SO, YOU'VE FOUND ME, SKULL MAN!!
HEH HEH HEH.
HERE YOU ARE, PARASITE BOY!

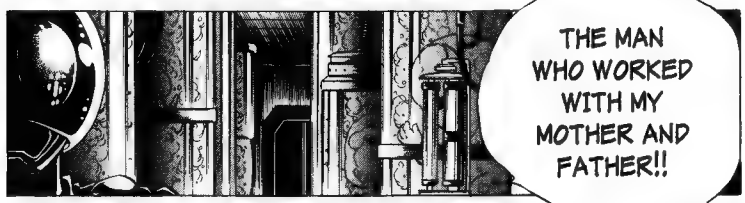
12
複製人研究棄室
CLONE
LABORATORY

THIS ROOM?!
WHA ...?!


NO...
IT'S MY LAB!
THIS SETUP... IT LOOKS LIKE...
IT'S AN EXACT DUPLICATE!
THE LAB I BUILT IN THE OLD CHURCH! JUST LIKE IT!
THE LAB THAT I DESIGNED!


A HUMAN CLONING LAB?!
NO... SOMETHING MORE.

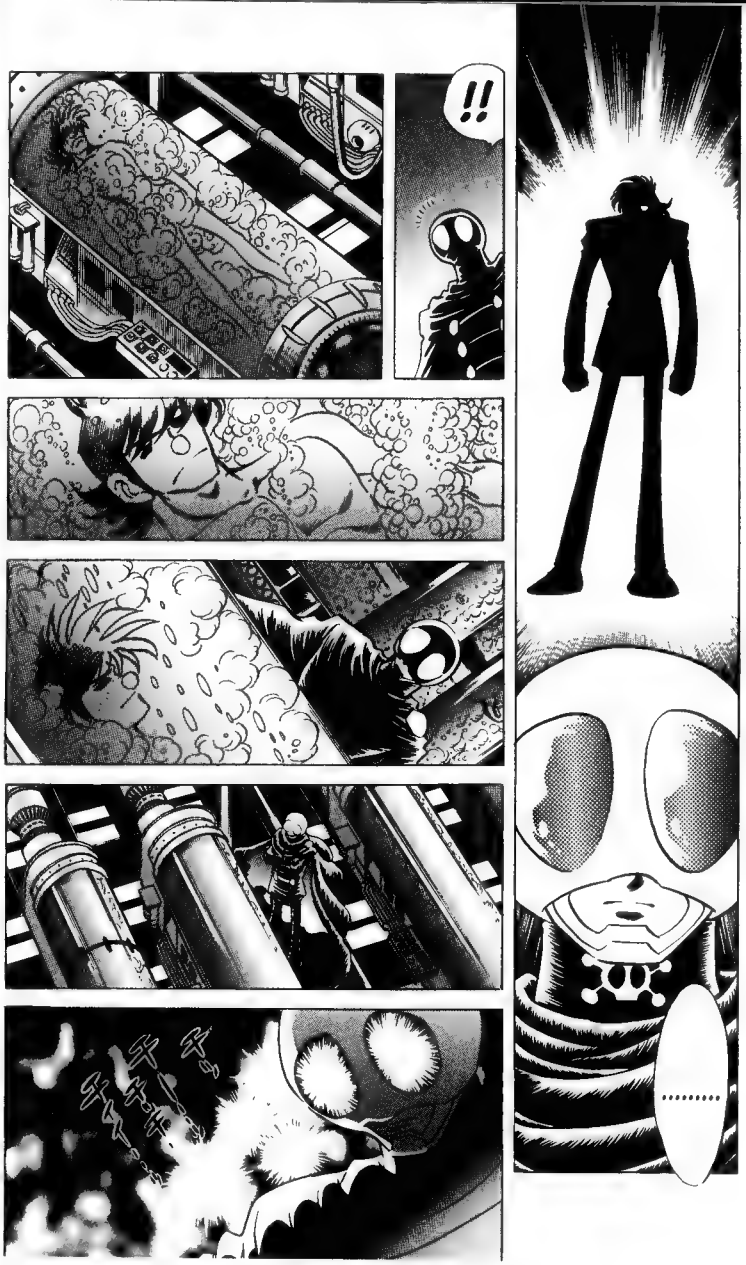
MY GRANDFATHER, TORATSUKI CHISATO; MY SISTER MAYA...
MY PARENTS...
THE ARTIFICIAL HUMAN, GARO...
AND...
BUT THE ONLY ONES WHO WOULD KNOW THOSE PLANS...
...WOULD BE...
SOMEONE ASSOCIATED WITH THE INITIAL BUILDING OR THE LAB.


THE MAN WHO WORKED WITH MY MOTHER AND FATHER!!

HOW COULD SOMEONE HAVE COPIED IT?!
NO! IT CAN'T BE...
DID SOMEBODY STEAL MY BLUEPRINTS...?

...SOMEBODY KNEW MY ORIGINAL PLANS!!
THERE ARE PARTS HERE THAT I DELETED FROM THE BLUEPRINTS... WHICH MEANS...

A CLONE...
ALTHOUGH IT'S NOT FINISHED YET...
IT'S ALIVE, BUT IT'S MIND ISN'T PROGRAMMED YET.
IT'S ONLY GOT RAW INSTINCT, LIKE A WILD ANIMAL.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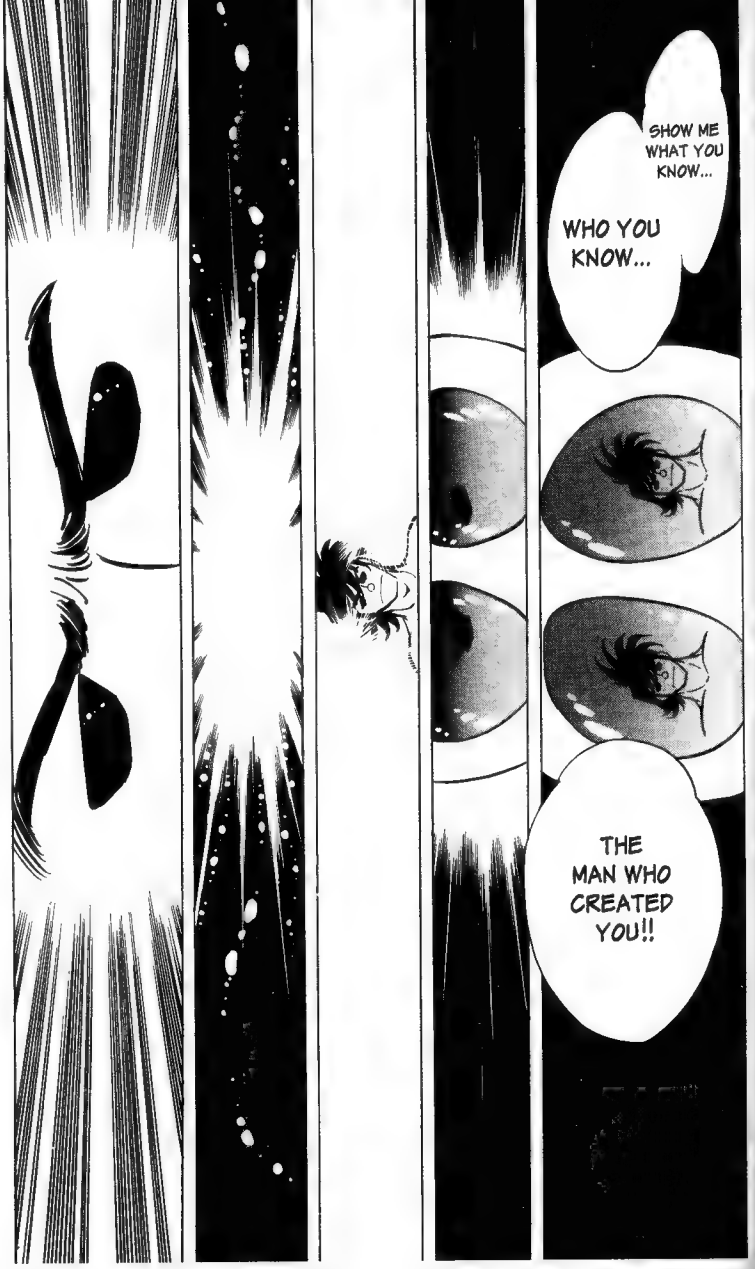
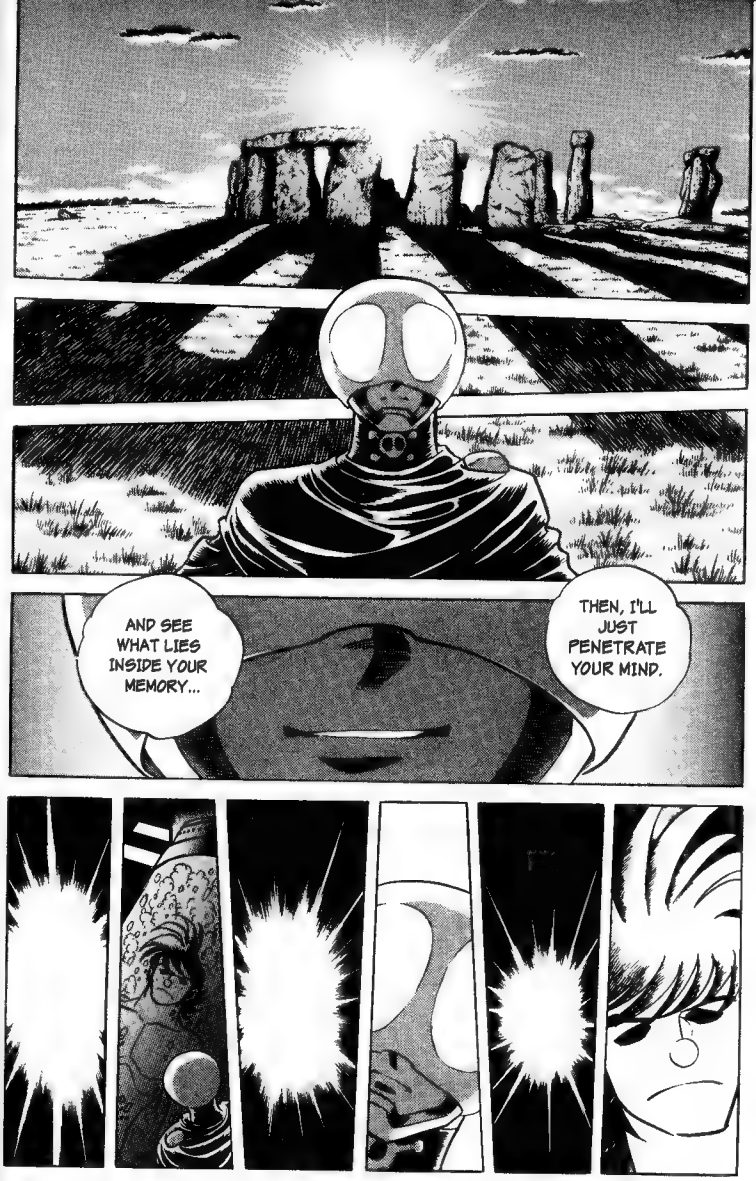
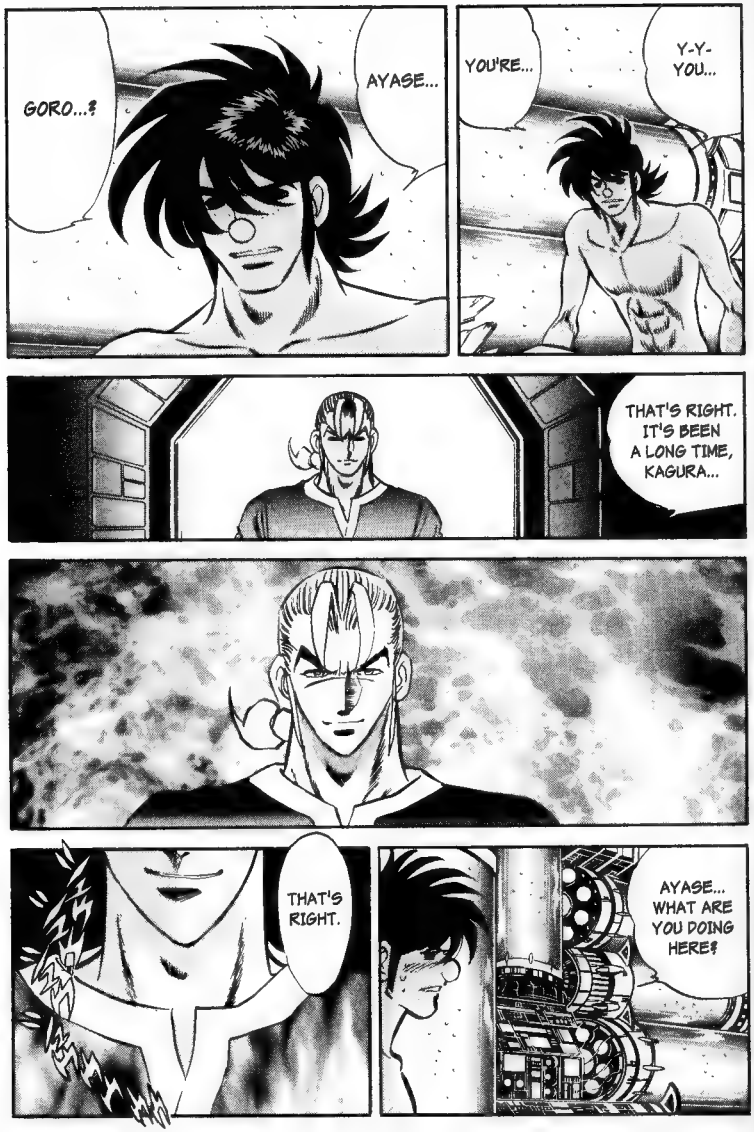
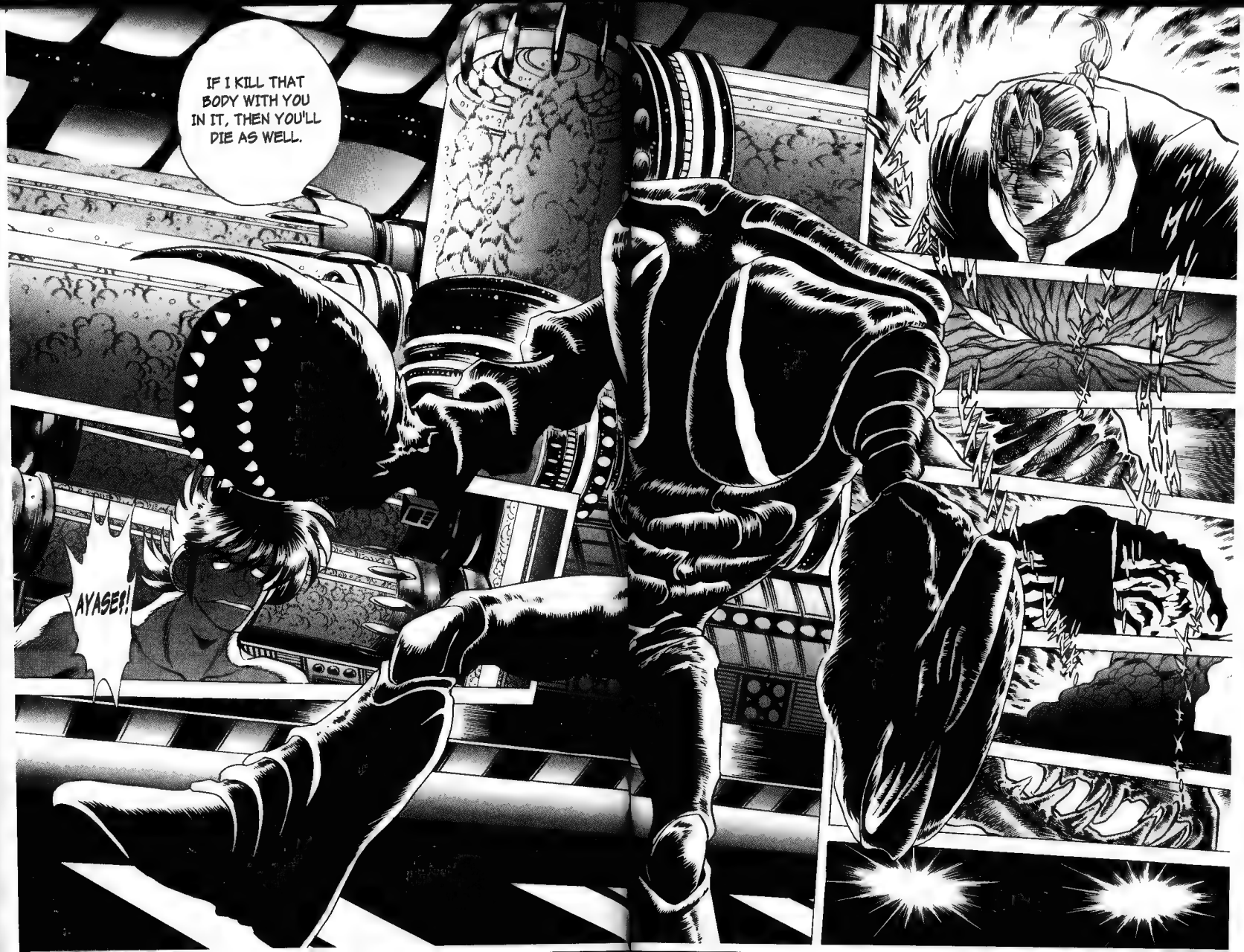

SHOW ME WHAT YOU KNOW...
WHO YOU KNOW...
THE MAN WHO CREATED YOU!!


AND SEE WHAT LIES INSIDE YOUR MEMORY...
THEN, I'LL JUST PENETRATE YOUR MIND.


GORO...?
AYASE...
YOU'RE...
Y-Y-YOU...
THAT'S RIGHT. IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME, KAGURA...
THAT'S RIGHT.
AYASE... WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

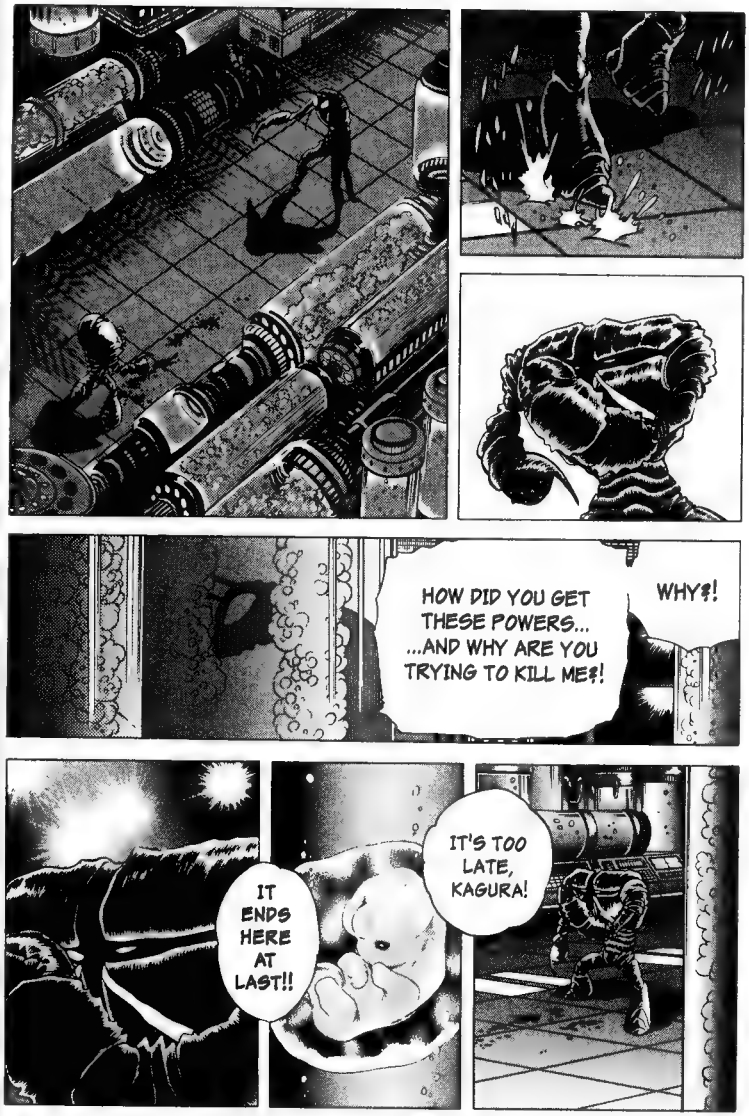
THAT'S AN INTERESTING TRICK!
THAT BODY IN THE CHURCH WAS JUST A CLONED SHELL YOU CREATED, WASN'T IT?
YOU CAN ENTER AN UNCONSCIOUS BODY AND MANIPULATE IT AS IF IT WERE YOUR OWN.


IF I KILL THAT BODY WITH YOU IN IT, THEN YOU'LL DIE AS WELL.
AYASE!!

AYASE!!
I DON'T WANT
TO FIGHT YOU!
STOP!
STOP
IT!
YOU DON'T HAVE
ANY REASON TO
FIGHT ME!!

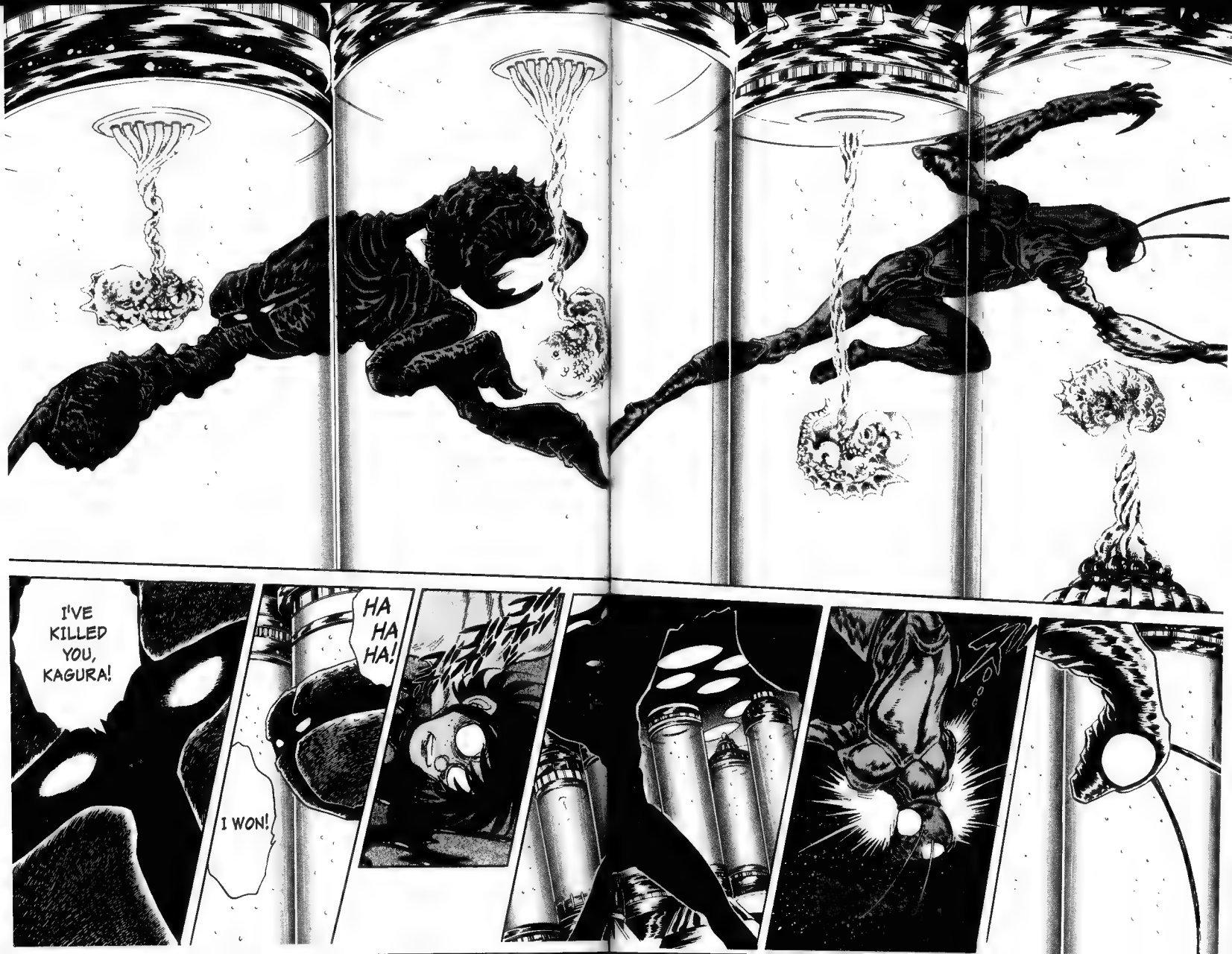
I'M
GONNA KILL
YOU BEFORE
YOU CAN
RETURN TO
YOUR REAL
BODY!!
GGGAHH!!

WRONG, KAGURA... I DO!


HOW DID YOU GET THESE POWERS... ...AND WHY ARE YOU TRYING TO KILL ME?!
WHY?!
IT ENDS HERE AT LAST!!
IT'S TOO LATE, KAGURA!

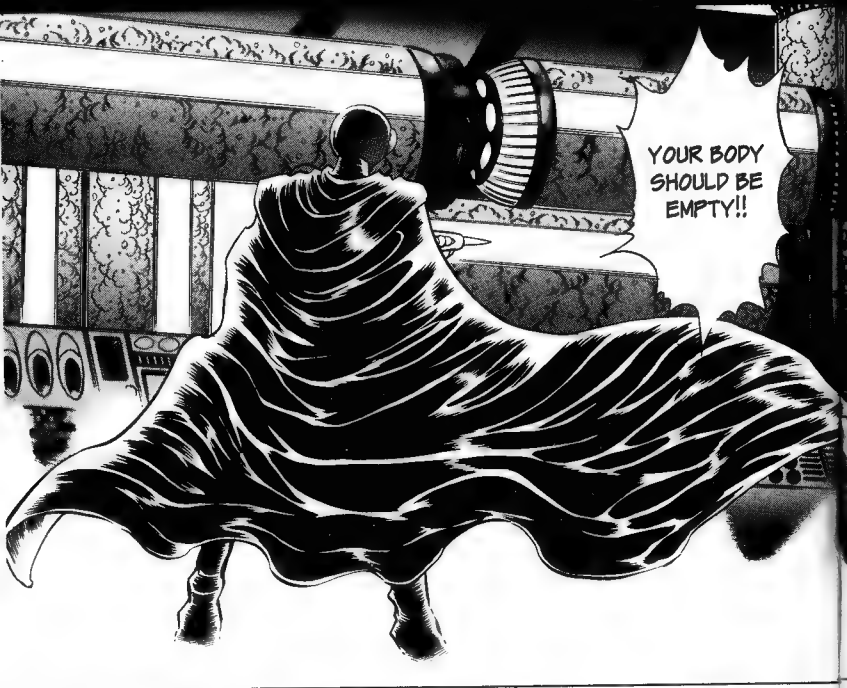
WAS I WRONG, AYASE?!
I DON'T UNDERSTAND. BACK IN SCHOOL YOU WERE MY FRIEND.
YOU FINALLY GOT IT, KAGURA!!
NO, YOU WERE RIGHT...
VERY RIGHT.

NGH!!

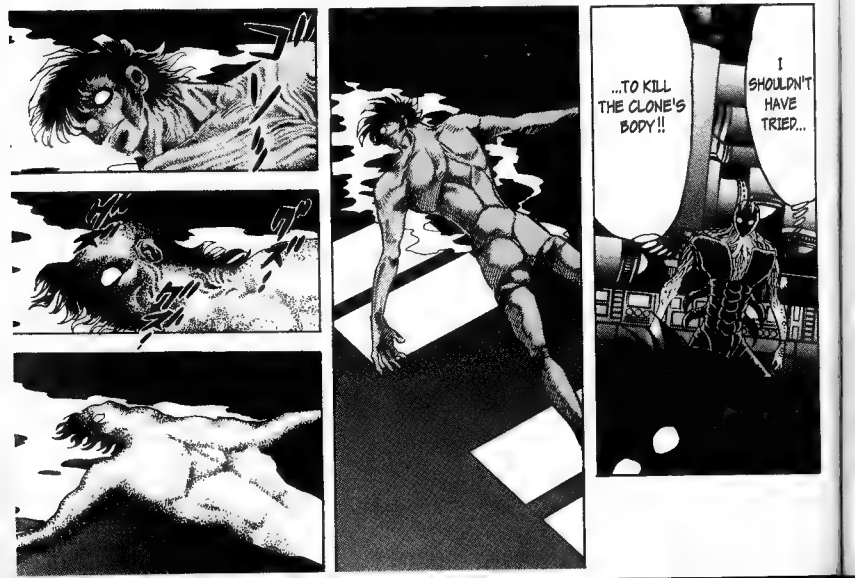

I'VE KILLED YOU, KAGURA!
I WON!
HA HA HA!

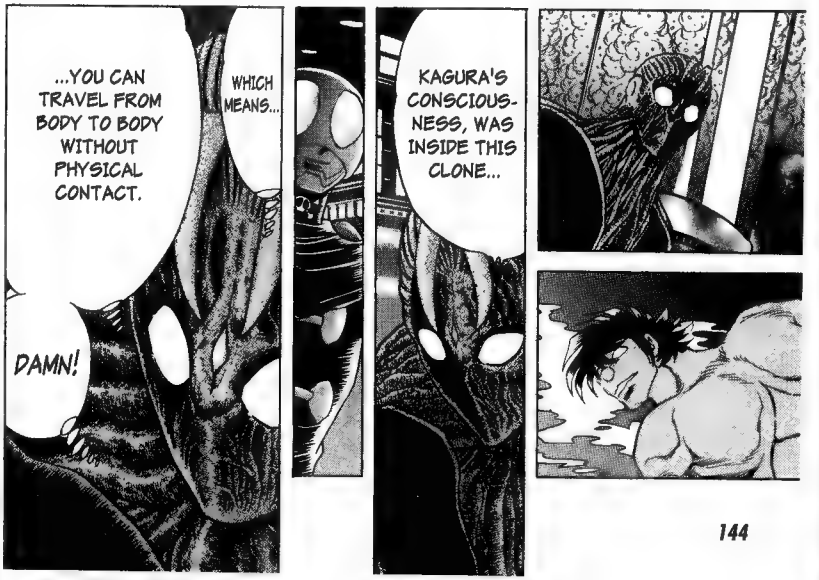
HOW...?!
13
燃える夜をあなたに
THE NIGHT BURNS FOR YOU

K...
KASUGA!!

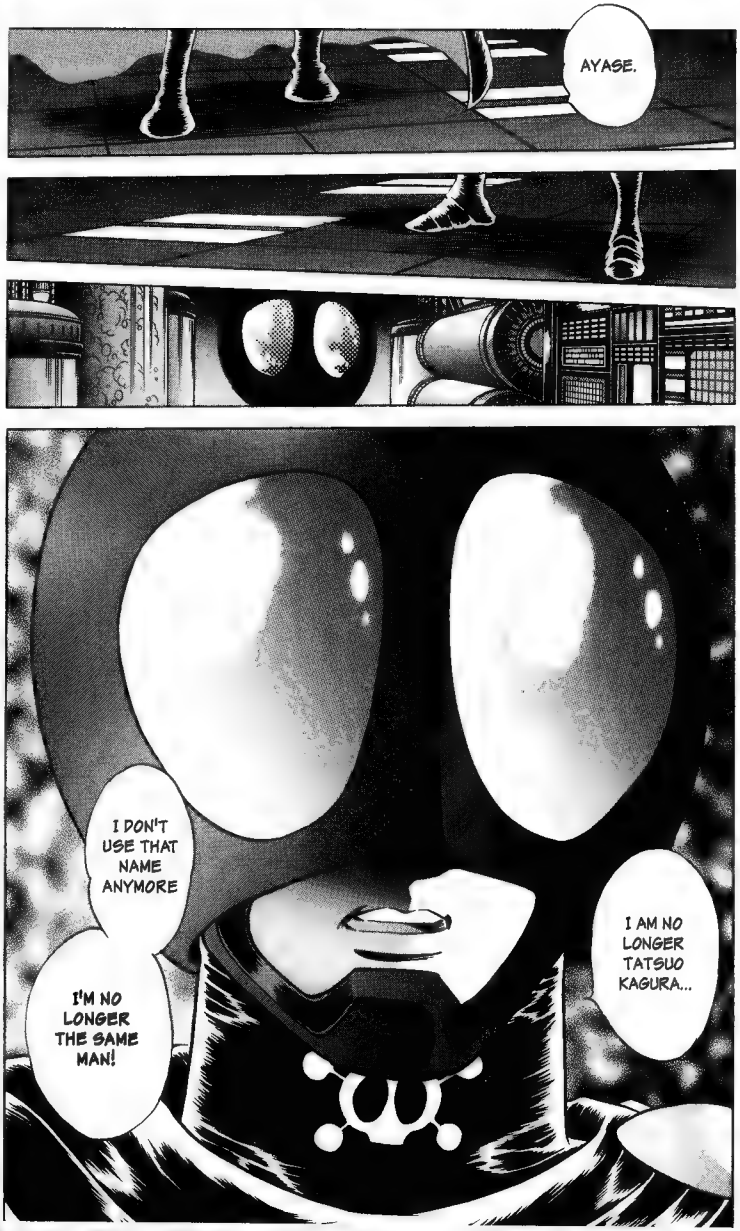

YOUR BODY SHOULD BE EMPTY!!

YOU'RE JUST A SHELL.
HOW CAN YOU BE ALIVE?


I SHOULDN'T HAVE TRIED...
...TO KILL THE CLONE'S BODY!!


...YOU CAN TRAVEL FROM BODY TO BODY WITHOUT PHYSICAL CONTACT.
WHICH MEANS...
DAMN!
KAGURA'S CONSCIOUSNESS, WAS INSIDE THIS CLONE...

HE WAS A MAN...
...WHO LIVED ONLY FOR REVENGE. DAY AND NIGHT, NOTHING BUT VENGENANCE.
I DIED.
HE DIED THAT DAY IN THE FIRE!!
NOW I'VE RECLAIMED THE NAME OF THE MAN I'VE ALWAYS HATED.
THE SINS COMMITTED BY TATSUO KAGURA DIED WITH HIM.
I'M CHISATO NOW. RYUSEI CHISATO!!


AYASE.
I DON'T USE THAT NAME ANYMORE
I AM NO LONGER TATSUO KAGURA...
I'M NO LONGER THE SAME MAN!

ARE YOU OKAY?
HEY! WAKE UP!
UGNNH...
HMM...
WH... WHERE AM I?

"CHISATO."
"RYUSEI."
HA HA HA! I DISAPPEARED ONCE... EXTINGUISHED LIKE A SHOOTING STAR...
I THINK IT'S AN APPROPRIATE NAME FOR A MAN WHO ISN'T SUPPOSED TO EXIST.

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SKULL MAN!!
!!
HE'S ALIVE...

WHAT HAPPENED?
DID SOMETHING HAPPEN?
THAT'S WHAT I'D LIKE TO KNOW.
WHA...

WHAT?
DO YOU KNOW WHERE THE ATTACKER WENT?
MMM...
THEY'VE DISAPPEARED... THEY'VE ALL VANISHED...
THERE WERE
SO MANY DRUG-ADDICT-RELATED INCIDENTS REPORTED...
AND THE CITY WAS TEEMING...
THEY WERE EVERYWHERE, YET...

SKULL MAN?!
WHAT?
HE'S STILL ALIVE. I KNEW IT!!
YOU MEAN
THAT GUY WHO APPEARED AT THE DRUG FACTORY YESTERDAY?
IS THAT WHO YOU MEAN?!
BUT WAIT A MINUTE.
YOU WERE ATTACKED BY ONE OF THOSE DRUG ADDICTS, WEREN'T YOU?
UH...
Y-Y-
YES!
THAT'S RIGHT!
THAT'S RIGHT, BUT...

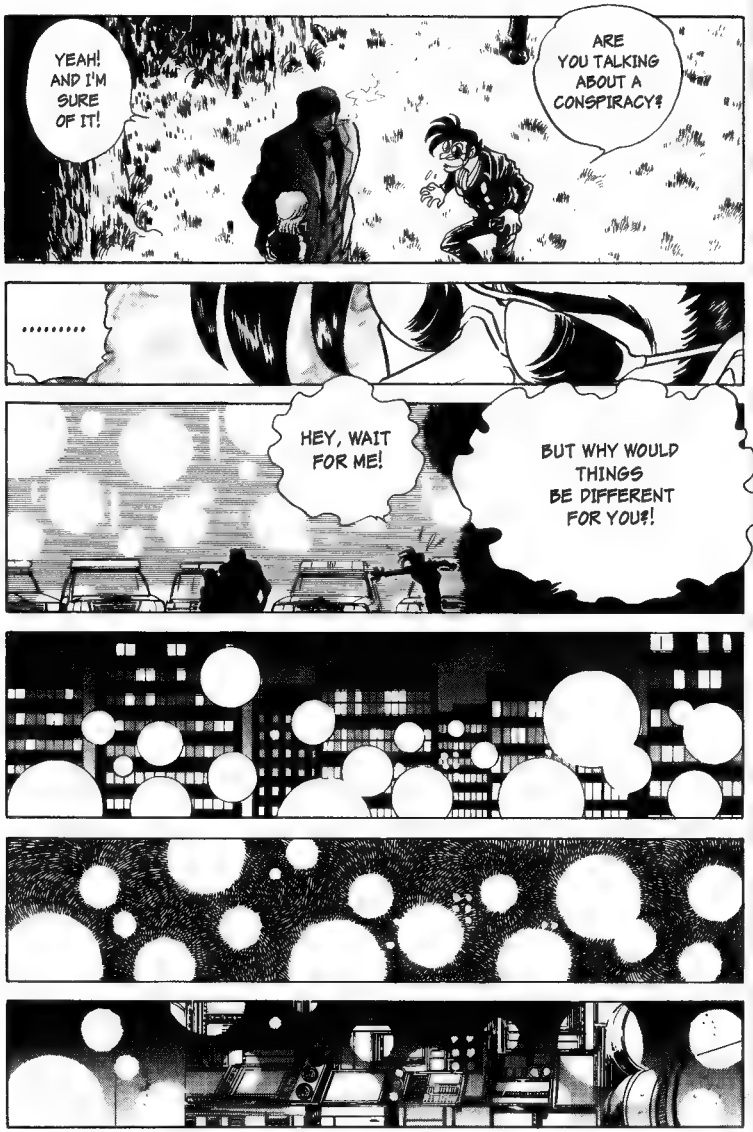
WE HAVEN'T FOUND A SUSPECT YET!!
BY THE TIME WE ARRIVED, ALL THAT REMAINED WAS THEIR CLOTHES!!
DAMMIT!
... IN THIS TOWN?
WHAT THE HELL'S GOING ON...

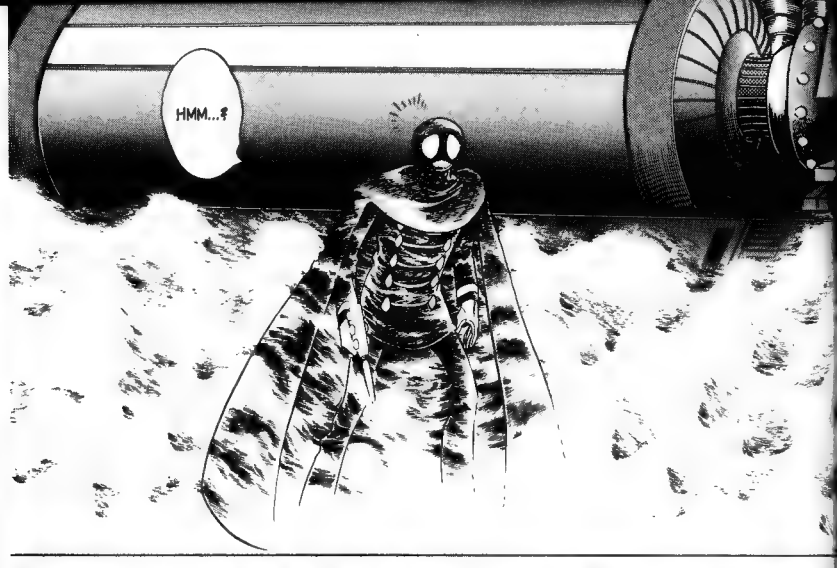
WHAT?!
WELL, WANNA GO OUT WITH ME?
I'M GETTING TO THE BOTTOM OF THIS!
THIS IS RIDICULOUS!
OTAKI!
WE CAN GO DUTCH IF YOU WANT...
WHY DON'T WE GO DO IT SOMEPLACE QUIET!!
IT'LL BE A DRAG GOING DOWN TO THE STATION FOR QUESTIONING, YOU KNOW?

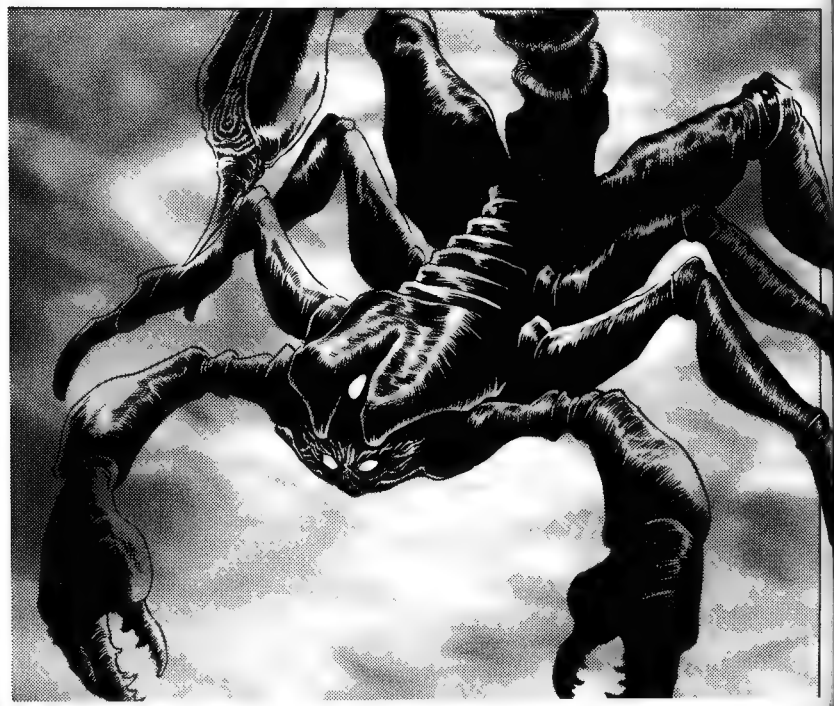
YOU MENTIONED THE SKULL MAN.
WHAT CAN YOU TELL ME?

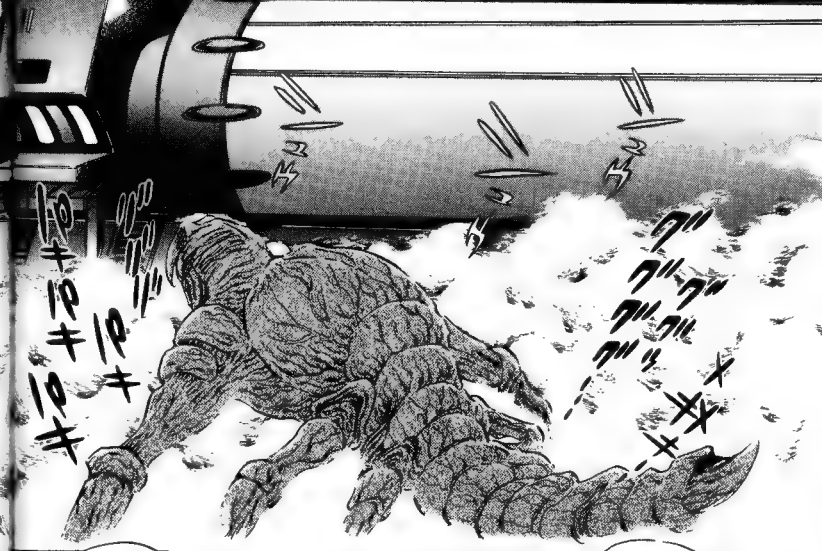
HIOKA!
HEY WAIT!
WHAT?
YOU CAN'T JUST MUSCLE ME OUT!!
THIS IS MY CASE!
EVERY TIME I WORK A CASE OF THIS NATURE, HIS NAME COMES UP.
AND SO FAR, HIS NAME IS ALL WE GET! CAN YOU EXPLAIN MORE?!
I'M INTRIGUED...

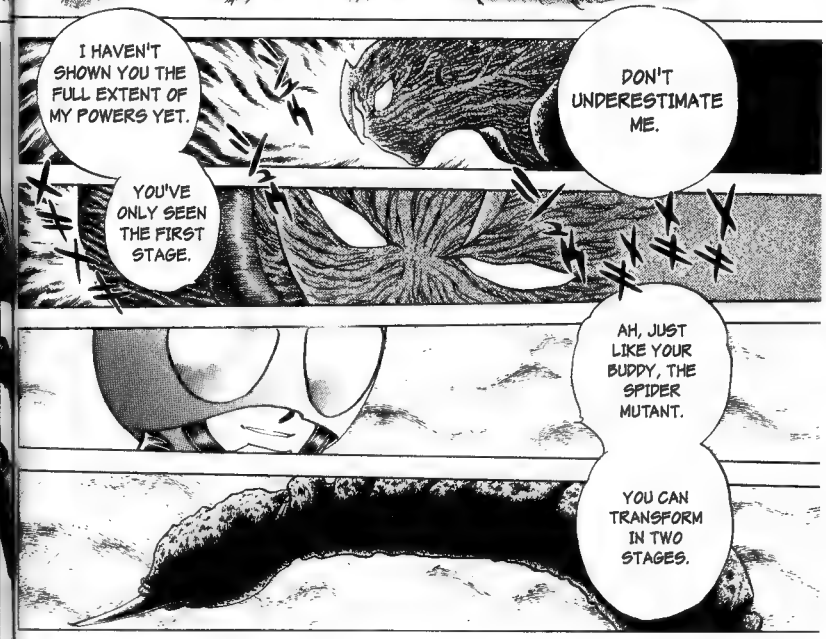
HEY!
I'LL QUESTION THIS WITNESS, ALRIGHT?
DON'T STICK YOUR BIG NOSE INTO THIS CASE ANYMORE!
YOU CAN'T DO THIS TO ME!
...AS SOON AS IT REACHES THE DEPARTMENT HEADS,
IT JUST GETS SWEPT UNDER THE RUG.
YOU KNOW THE DEAL. NO MATTER HOW MUCH WORK YOU PUT INTO IT...


YEAH! AND I'M SURE OF IT!
ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT A CONSPIRACY?
.....
HEY, WAIT FOR ME!
BUT WHY WOULD THINGS BE DIFFERENT FOR YOU?!


HMM...?

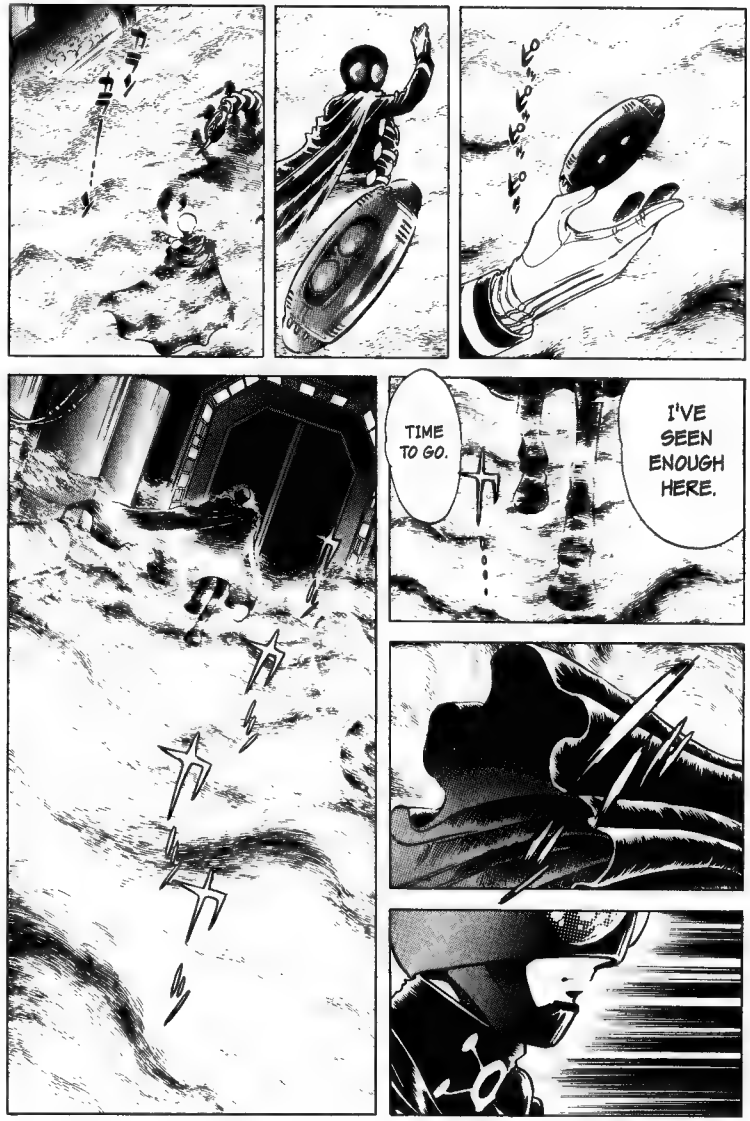




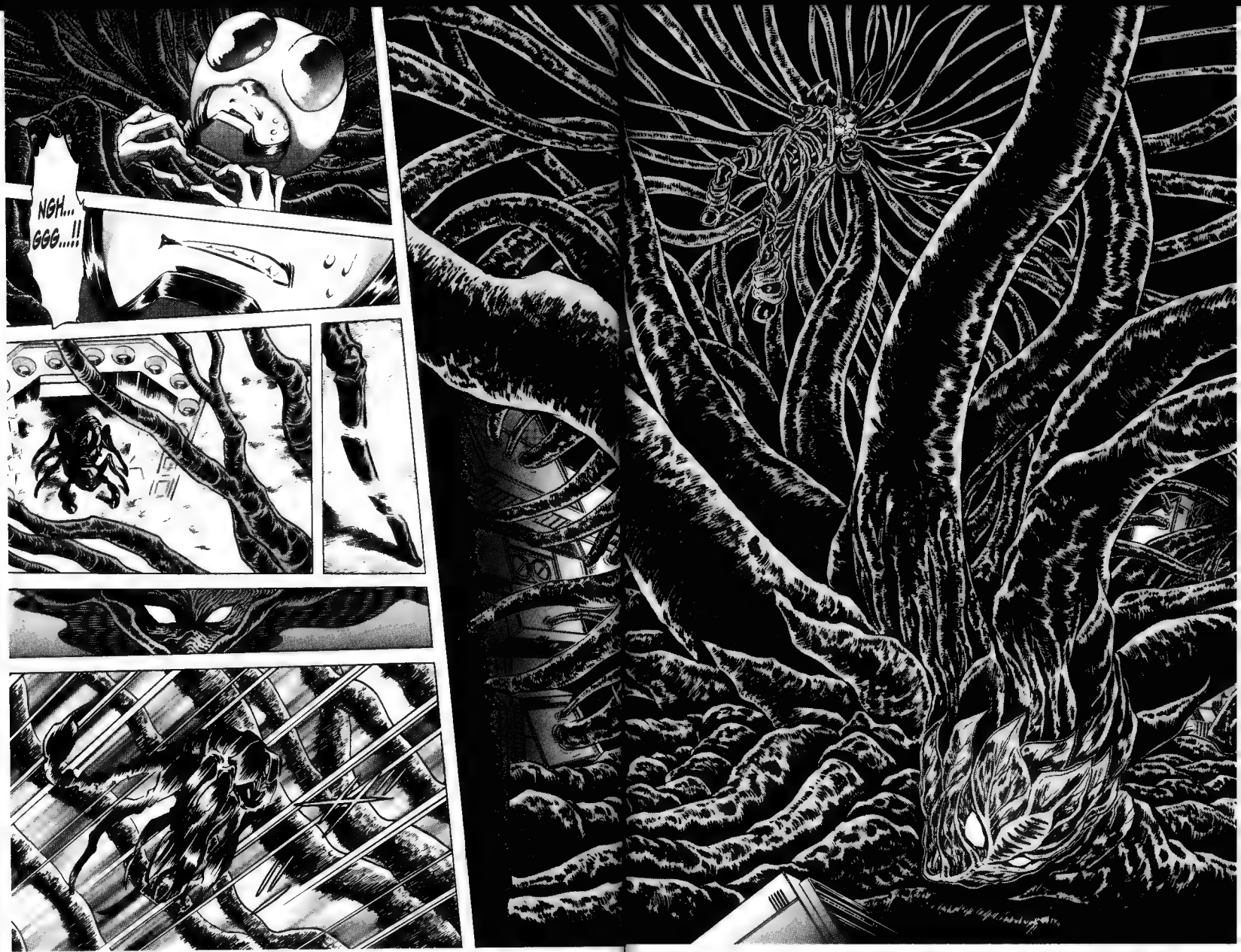

I HAVEN'T SHOWN YOU THE FULL EXTENT OF MY POWERS YET.
DON'T UNDERESTIMATE ME.
YOU'VE ONLY SEEN THE FIRST STAGE.
AH, JUST LIKE YOUR BUDDY, THE SPIDER MUTANT.
YOU CAN TRANSFORM IN TWO STAGES.

YOU'RE BADLY INJURED.
IT WAS PROBABLY ALL YOU COULD DO JUST TO TRANSFORM TO STAGE TWO.
THERE'S NO NEED FOR YOU TO SACRIFICE YOURSELF TRYING TO KILL ME.
YOU HAVEN'T A PRAYER, AYASE! JUST GO.
.....
.....
AYASE..
...I DON'T WANT TO KILL YOU.

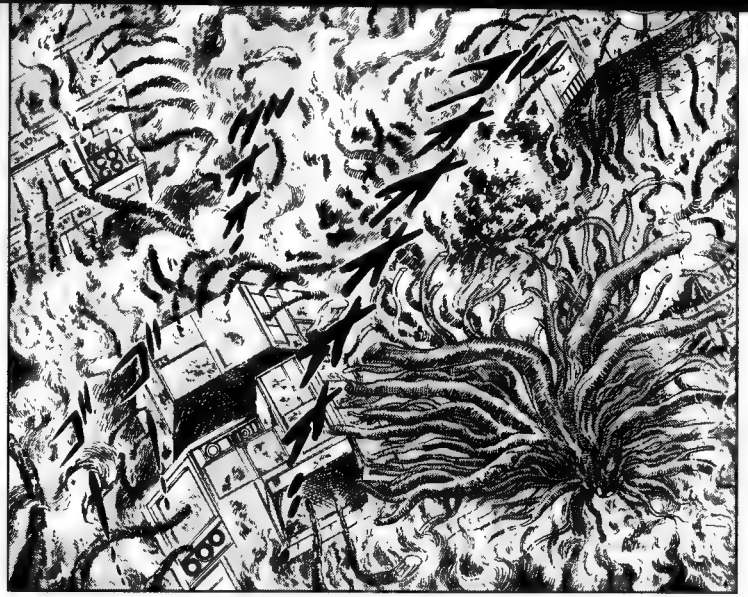
DON'T DO IT.


I'VE SEEN ENOUGH HERE.
TIME TO GO.

NOW WHAT?
NGH...


NGH...
GGG...!!

14 シークレット・ファイル SECRET FILE



OF COURSE EVERY JOURNALIST WANTS A JUICY STORY...
BUT IT'S DANGEROUS!
SOME OF OUR COLLEAGUES MAY HAVE ALREADY DIED.
YOU MEAN THESE GUYS?
SHIT.

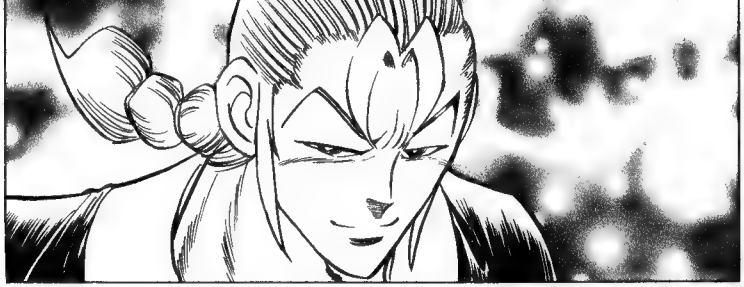
I SAW THEM AT THE BURNED OUT CHURCH.
I SNUCK IN FOR THE STORY.
IT WAS LIKE THEY NEVER EXISTED.
I TRIED CALLING LATER FOR AN INTERVIEW, BUT...
.....
MISSING DETECTIVES.
THESE ARE TWO OF OUR...
YOU WANT AN EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION...
SO, YOU WERE SAYING...
AND A PROMISE.

THIS IS A FILE OF REPORTS AND WITNESS ACCOUNTS.
BUT EYE-WITNESSES HAVE BEEN RELUCTANT TO TALK. SO, A LOT OF THE INFORMATION IS SECOND-HAND.
BUT BASED ON THIS, I'VE PUT TOGETHER A PROFILE ON THE SKULL MAN. INTERESTED?
OKAY! LET'S GO!
SEE YA, KAGURA...
OR SHOULD I SAY, RYUSEI CHISATO.

WE'LL SET THINGS UP SO THAT IF ANYTHING HAPPENS TO US...
ALL OUR INFORMATION WILL BE SENT TO YOU.
AND I'LL DO THE SAME ON MY END.
YEAH, THAT'S RIGHT...
SO THEN, IT JUST DEPENDS ON WHETHER I CAN TRUST YOU.

I NEED A PICTURE OF YOU TWO.

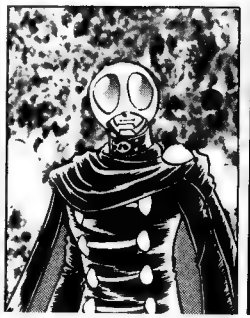
YOU LITTLE BITCH!
SMILE NOW!
WHO KNOWS, YOU GUYS MIGHT BE THE NEXT TO DISAPPEAR!



AYASE, WHAT'LL YOU DO NOW?
IF THEY FIND OUT THAT YOU KILLED ONE OF YOUR OWN BUDDIES TO SAVE ME...
THEY'LL SEND ASSASSINS AFTER YOU.
HMPH...
YOU MEAN LIKE SPIDER?

MORE LIKE I COULDN'T STAND YOU BEING BETTER THAN ME.

I HAD TO CLOSE THE GAP AS MUCH AS I COULD.



I'LL ALWAYS CONSIDER YOU MY BEST FRIEND.
DON'T PULL THAT WITH ME.
YOU HAD YOURSELF MUTATED JUST SO YOU COULD KILL ME.

CORRECT.
I WAS ORDERED TO EXECUTE PARASITE GREEN!
DO YOU MEAN...
SO... SINCE HE WAS MUTATED INTO A VEGATABLE...
...YOU COULD TELL THEM HE WAS STIR-FRIED IN THE LAB FIRE.
HEH HEH!
THAT'S A GOOD ONE. I'LL USE THAT.

MY ASSIGNMENT WASN'T TO KILL YOU.
DON'T WORRY. I HAVEN'T DONE ANYTHING TO BETRAY THE ORGANIZATION!
PARASITE GREEN WASN'T ORDERED TO KILL YOU, EITHER.
HIS ATTACK ON YOU WAS HIS RASH DECISION ALONE.
HE WAS AN IMCOMPETENT FOOL. HIS LETTING YOU TRACK HIM BACK TO THE LAB PROVED THAT.

WHEN THE TIME COMES ...
...IT COMES.
SO IF THEY DO ORDER YOU TO KILL ME...
AYASE?
THE ORGANIZATION HASN'T DECIDED TO PAY ANY SPECIAL ATTENTION TO YOU JUST YET...
BUT DON'T GET COMPLA-CENT, RYUSEI...
神楽
WHEN THE TIME COMES, IT COMES.

THE SKULL MAN, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS TATSUO KAGURA, WAS BORN TO PARENTS OF EXCEPTIONAL ABILITIES...
I SEE. AND?
HE WAS NAMED TATSUO CHISATO, AND WAS RAISED WITH GREAT CARE... HE WAS MOST LIKELY THEIR TRUE FLESH AND BLOOD SON, AND NOT A CLONE OR ARTIFICIAL MAN.
EXCEPTIONAL ABILITIES?
THEY WERE SCIENTIFIC AND CREATIVE GENIUSES. THEY HAD INCREDIBLE PHYSICAL ABILITIES - STRENGTH, SPEED, ENDURANCE.
WHAT MAKES YOU THINK SO?
IN SOME WAYS, THEY MAY HAVE BEEN CONSIDERED "SUPERHUMAN."

GRANDPA?!
GRANDPA...?
HOW COULD...?!
WHA...
?
NO!

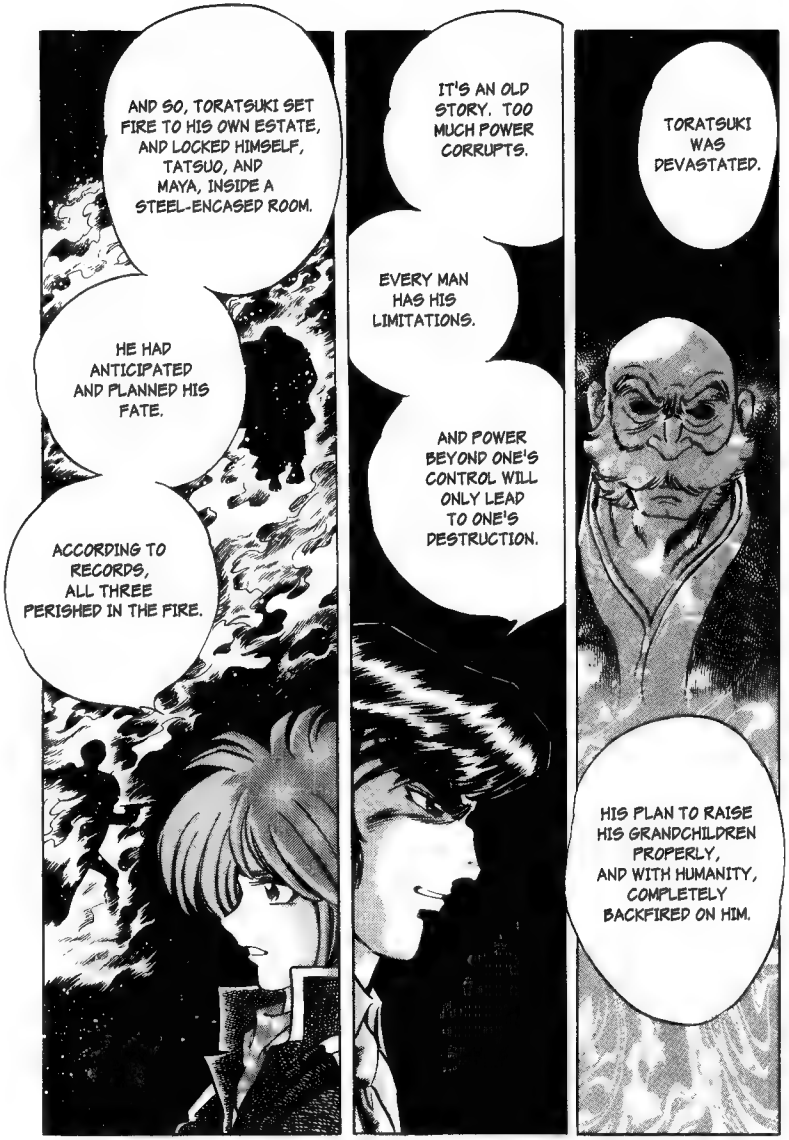
HIS PARENTS CREATED AN ARTIFICIAL HUMAN, EITHER TO BE HIS PLAYMATE OR BODYGUARD.
HIS NAME WAS GARO. AND HE HAD THE ABILITY TO MORPH INTO A MAN-SIZE WOLF, BAT, AND CROCODILE.
AN ARTIFICIAL HUMAN?!
HIS GRANDFATHER, TORATSUKI CHISATO, WAS ALARMED BY THESE DEVELOPMENTS...
AND WHEN A SECOND CHILD, TATSUO'S SISTER, MAYA, WAS BORN...
HE MUST HAVE DECIDED TO MURDER HIS SON AND DAUGHTER-IN-LAW!!

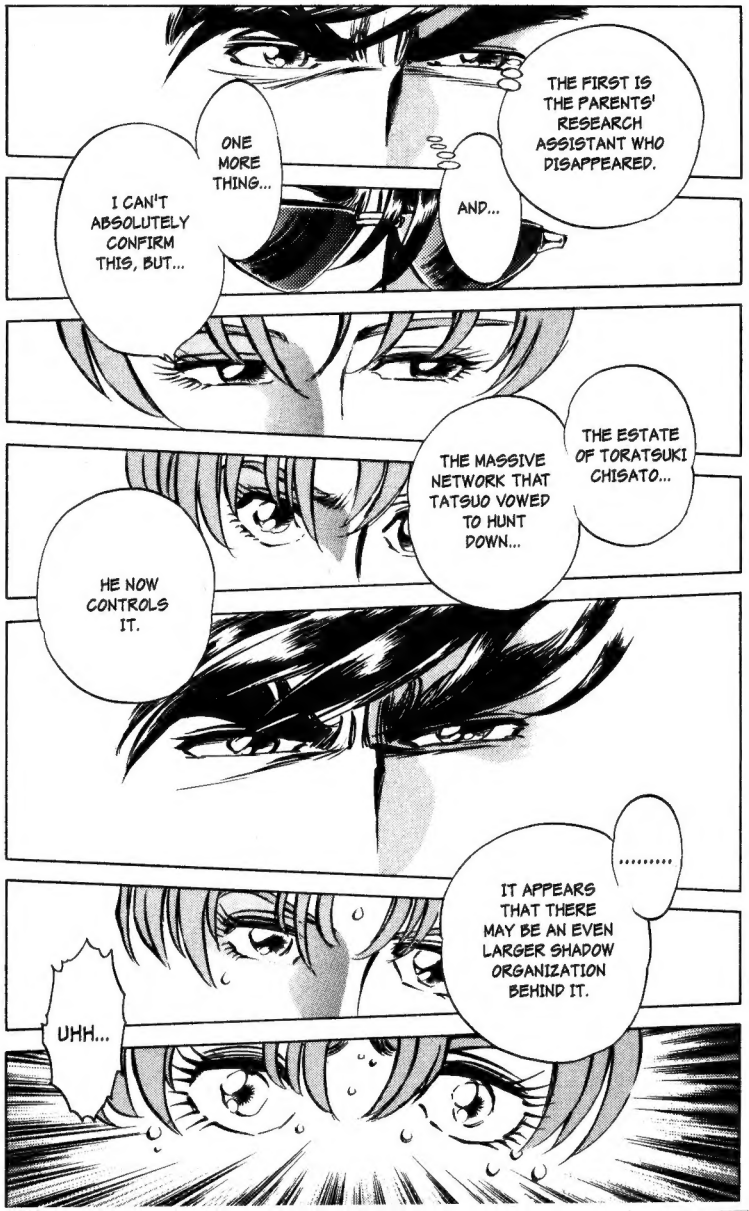
HE ALWAYS FELT WARY ABOUT HIS SON AND DAUGHTER-IN-LAW'S ABILITIES.
BUT WHEN HIS FEARS WERE CONFIRMED...
...HIS SENSE OF PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY, HIS GUILT...
...AND, FINALLY, HIS OVERWHELMING FEAR, DROVE HIM TO CARRY OUT HIS ASSASSINATION PLOT.
THEIR ABILITIES ARE WHAT THEY ARE. BUT IT'S HOW THEY CHOOSE TO USE THOSE POWERS.
THEY'VE ALLOWED THEIR SOULS TO BE CORRUPTED BY THEIR POWERS.

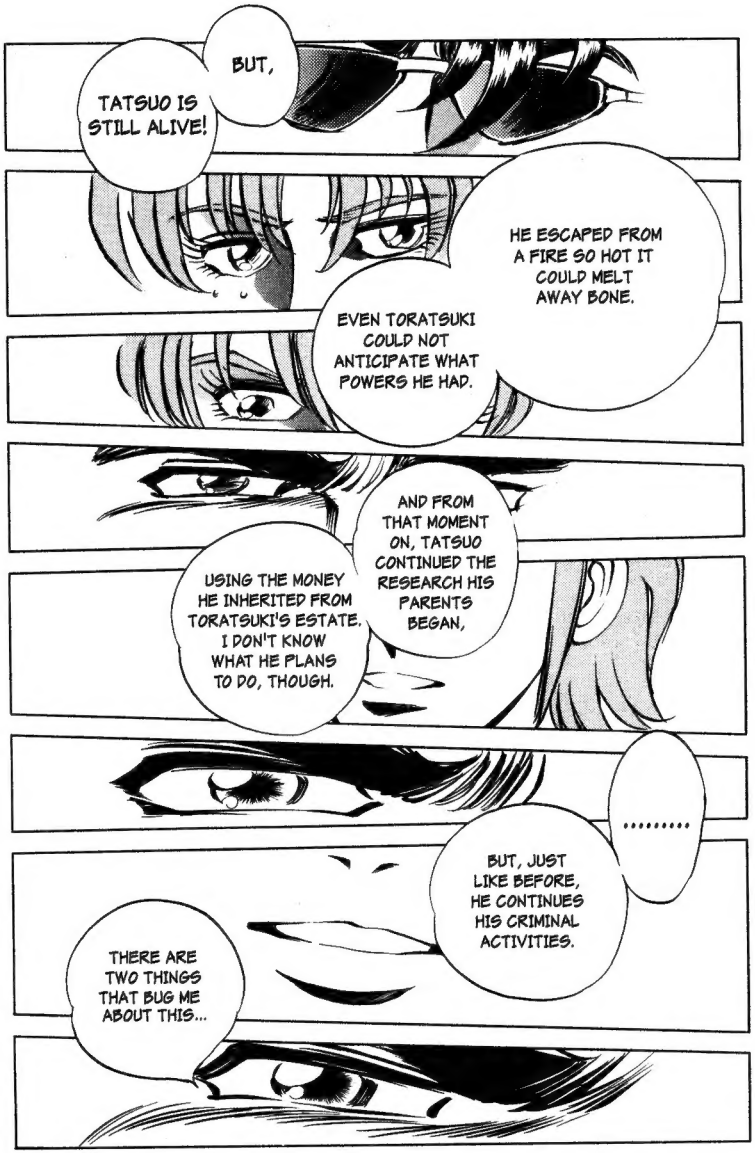
THEY'RE CONTROLLED BY THEIR POWERS RATHER THAN BY THEIR HUMANITY.
BUT, I CANNOT ALLOW THEM TO LIVE WITH THESE POWERS. FOR THEIR SAKE, THEIR CHILDREN'S SAKE...
THEY'VE COMMITTED NO SIN.

BRING HIM BACK!!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!
G-G-GARO!
KILL THE WOLF IF YOU HAVE TO!
FOR CHRISSAKES, BRING THE BOY BACK!
AND THE MAN WHO ASSISTED TATSUO'S PARENTS IN THEIR WORK ALSO DISAPPEARED.
BUT TATSUO WAS NEVER FOUND.

THEREAFTER, TATSUO WAS RAISED BY THE KAGURA CLAN, AND ELUDED HIS PURSUERS.
AND AFTER GRADUATING HIGH SCHOOL, HE TRACKED DOWN HIS PARENTS' KILLERS, AND USED HIS EXTRAORDINARY POWERS TO EXACT COLD-BLOODED VENGEANCE.
HE DISCOVERED THAT IT WAS HIS OWN GRANDFATHER, AND THAT HE HAD A SISTER, AS WELL.
HE HUNTED AND KILLED ANYONE CONNECTED TO THE MURDERS, AND WHEN HE FINALLY TRACKED DOWN THE MASTERMIND BEHIND IT ALL,


TORATSUKI WAS DEVASTATED.
HIS PLAN TO RAISE HIS GRANDCHILDREN PROPERLY, AND WITH HUMANITY, COMPLETELY BACKFIRED ON HIM.
IT'S AN OLD STORY. TOO MUCH POWER CORRUPTS.
EVERY MAN HAS HIS LIMITATIONS.
AND POWER BEYOND ONE'S CONTROL WILL ONLY LEAD TO ONE'S DESTRUCTION.
AND SO, TORATSUKI SET FIRE TO HIS OWN ESTATE, AND LOCKED HIMSELF, TATSUO, AND MAYA, INSIDE A STEEL-ENCASED ROOM.
HE HAD ANTICIPATED AND PLANNED HIS FATE.
ACCORDING TO RECORDS, ALL THREE PERISHED IN THE FIRE.


THE FIRST IS THE PARENTS' RESEARCH ASSISTANT WHO DISAPPEARED.
AND...
ONE MORE THING...
I CAN'T ABSOLUTELY CONFIRM THIS, BUT...
THE ESTATE OF TORATSUKI CHISATO...
THE MASSIVE NETWORK THAT TATSUO VOWED TO HUNT DOWN...
HE NOW CONTROLS IT.
.....
IT APPEARS THAT THERE MAY BE AN EVEN LARGER SHADOW ORGANIZATION BEHIND IT.
UHH...


BUT,
TATSUO IS STILL ALIVE!
HE ESCAPED FROM A FIRE SO HOT IT COULD MELT AWAY BONE.
EVEN TORATSUKI COULD NOT ANTICIPATE WHAT POWERS HE HAD.
AND FROM THAT MOMENT ON, TATSUO CONTINUED THE RESEARCH HIS PARENTS BEGAN,
USING THE MONEY HE INHERITED FROM TORATSUKI'S ESTATE. I DON'T KNOW WHAT HE PLANS TO DO, THOUGH.
.....
BUT, JUST LIKE BEFORE, HE CONTINUES HIS CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES.
THERE ARE TWO THINGS THAT BUG ME ABOUT THIS...

A SCOR-
PION!!
RIGHT!
GET AN
AMBULANCE,
OTAK!!!
SATSUK!!!
SATSUKI!

To be continued...

Kick the kitty
wilson
wilson